



# UPON THIS ROCK.

A LIFE-CHRONICLE  
OF THE  
LAST CENTURY OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION.

BY  
M. C. O'BYRNE.

"We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind."

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"I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
I care not what the sects may brawl.  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all."

(Tennyson.)

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A FIVE-CHRONICLE

1877

LAST CENTURY OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

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THIS BOOK  
IS DEDICATED  
To the English People  
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,

WHOSE DESTINY IT NEEDS NO PROPHET TO FORETELL,  
AND BY AND THROUGH WHOM THE "SUPREME CAUCASIAN  
MIND,"  
—EMANCIPATED FROM EVERY SUPERSTITION, AND CHECKED BY  
NO APPREHENSION FOUNDED ON MYSTERY,—  
MUST EVERMORE CONTINUE TO MANIFEST ITS HIGHEST  
DEVELOPMENT;  
TO THAT PEOPLE WHOSE PROUDEST BOAST IT IS THAT THEIR  
FOREFATHERS, WHEN THEY FREED THEMSELVES FROM THE  
MENTAL THRALDOM WHICH FOR AGES IMPEDED CIVIL-  
IZATION AND PROGRESS, MADE CLEAR THE WAY  
FOR THAT UNIVERSAL EMPIRE WHICH THE  
TWENTIETH CENTURY AT ITS CLOSE  
WILL CONCEDE TO  
THE ANGLO-SAXON RACE.

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THE SAKON RAGE  
A NOVEL  
IN THREE VOLUMES  
BY  
THE AUTHOR OF  
"THE SAKON RAGE"

LONDON: THE SAKON RAGE

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THE SAKON RAGE

# UPON THIS ROCK.

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## BOOKE YE FIRST.

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### CHAPTER I.

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#### INTRODUCING A LORD, A LADY, AND A PLEBEIAN.

"WANTED, an Organist, capable of conducting a small choir in a country church. Apply, with testimonials, to G., office of this paper."

SO ran an advertisement in the proper column of a certain long-established metropolitan Catholic paper early in the year of grace 1870. How many applications, with testimonials, were sent to "G." is equally beyond our province and our ability to declare. They may have been many or they may have been few, but however this may be, only three persons—all young men—were selected to have a final interview with the advertiser, about a week after the appearance of the announcement. These three candidates, with one of whom this history will concern itself, might have been seen sitting a few feet inside the entrance hall of a mansion in Belgravia on the day in question, all of them wearing much the same sort of expression as they might have been expected to wear had they been about to undergo a trial for murder. Ample time was afforded them to meditate upon their probable chances or to allow their minds to become impressed with the grandeur of the position of a member of England's upper ten, to which favoured class the unknown advertiser evidently belonged. The hall was in itself larger than a suburban villa, with a high, old-fashioned heating-stove—without a fire—a servants' table, and a pedestal whereon stood a massive bust, presumably that of the lord of the mansion. A broad flight of steps led up to the higher regions from one end of the lobby, and a life-sized portrait of a middle-aged man with a very red face and a big wig seemed to be pointing the way to

all who might have occasion to mount the staircase. Doubtless the place-seekers who contemplated all this felt properly awed long before they were summoned, by a most respectable undertaker-like domestic, into the presence of the mysterious and mighty "G." Happily for them, they were not called upon to ascend the staircase up which the rubicund ancestor was always so perseveringly staring, but were led off through a door at the left, and found themselves in a large, plainly furnished apartment hung with other portraits of ladies and gentlemen bearing a strong family resemblance to him of the staircase.

At a side table in this room was seated a man somewhat past the prime of life, who turned half round on his chair as the candidates were ushered into his presence. Austere in feature he certainly was, but with his haughtiness was blended a certain air of benevolence and of serenity which indicated that he was either a philanthropist or a devotee. When he spoke his voice was carefully modulated.

"I am," he said, "the Earl of Guisborough, and you are here in response to my advertisement for an organist. Your letters I have, of course, read, and the testimonials, all of which are most unexceptionable. Before we go any further let me state that the salary I shall give will be eighty pounds a year, so that the two of you who are married men will not find this sufficient. Is it not so?"

Hereupon two of the three candidates bowed, and one ventured to inquire whether his lordship, in the event of a married man being deemed most fitting for the vacant situation, would be disposed to increase the salary to a hundred pounds.

"When I say eighty pounds," gravely answered the Earl, "I do not mean a hundred. On no account would I desire any person to enter my establishment without adequate remuneration for his services, and therefore, as I have said, I do not think the place one for a married man."

So thought the two married men themselves, and they accordingly were courteously dismissed, leaving the Earl of Guisborough alone with the youngest candidate, who looked anything but rejoiced at thus having the field cleared before him.

"Your name is Desmond—Hugh Desmond," said his lordship, "and I learn from your letter and from Father Le-

maitre's testimonial that you are a convert. You are a very young man,—nineteen, I think? have you any experience in teaching?"

Hugh Desmond was young, and perhaps a certain effeminacy of appearance, only redeemed by his height and a slight shade upon his upper lip betokening the future moustache,—made him seem younger even than he was. His face was just now almost colourless, and he was evidently nervous. He had a profusion of dark-brown hair reaching down to his collar, where it became slightly wavy, as though inclined to curl. In repose his long-lashed eyes wore a dreamy, imaginative expression, but they lightened up like sudden fire when he spoke.

"My only experience, my lord, has been in a small private school,—my own,—which I have kept during the last two years."

"H—m," said the Earl, "a private school? Was it a mixed one?"

"No," replied the youth, "it was only for boys."

"Indeed, and pray what was the general course of lessons in your school? Merely the rudiments, I suppose; the three r's, as they are termed?"

"I taught those, my lord, together with history, navigation, and a little Latin and French."

"Latin and French, do you say? are not these rather lofty subjects for village children?"

"They would certainly be, my lord," replied the young man, "but some of my pupils were the sons of master mariners, tradesmen, and so on, while my evening-school was attended by many who were older than their teacher."

"Ah, yes; I understand," said the nobleman. "You are the son of a sailor; I think you so wrote me. Did you teach yourself Latin, Mr. Desmond? If so, it does you credit."

"Nay, your lordship; my teacher was a minister of the Church—I mean of the establishment, the minister of my native town."

After a brief pause, during which the Earl closely scanned the countenance of the youth, he said:—

"Well, Mr. Desmond, although I mainly require an organist for our choir of village children, there would also be a little work for him in the school as assistant to the master, who is an old man. I fear the routine work there might prove

drudgery to one who seems qualified for a much higher position. However, this is a consideration for yourself. I may state at once that, if your musical capabilities are satisfactory,—of course our requirements are of the simplest nature,—why, we may settle the matter at once. This question of music I am not competent to decide ; it is one, however, which my daughter Blanche will see to, so if you please we will go to her."

Going to the door, the Earl led the way into the vestibule, past the bewigged ancestor, up the wide staircase. Turning at the first landing, Desmond's glance fell upon the picture below him, and it struck him that the countenance bore a most portentous frown. Had the spirit or shade of the old Jacobite Colonel Meadows really been able to exercise some secret influence upon the canvas which portrayed him, there is little doubt, we think, that the portrait would have undergone some strange convulsion as the two men passed before it. Turning off to the left, the Earl stopped at a door which opened into an apartment containing, as Desmond instantly perceived, two things needful to decide his future, in the shape of a pianoforte and a harmonium. At one end of the room were two persons, a man and a woman ; the former a tall, soldier-like man of about thirty, the latter a beautiful creature of eighteen. That they were brother and sister was easily seen in the dark eyes, hair, and the slightly aquiline nose which were common to both. Captain Robert Meadows, the Earl's eldest son, cast a rather supercilious look upon his father's companion ; indeed, the gallant captain's physiognomy seemed to have made hauteur its regular visor, which was really a pity, seeing that he might well have been content with himself as Nature fashioned him.

"Robert," said the Earl, "I am about to engage a choir-master for Holmwood, and, as usual, the decision rests with Blanche. My dear," he said, "this is Mr. Desmond, whose letter you have already seen."

The honourable Captain gave the schoolmaster a stare and a scarcely perceptible nod and then left the party and the room, such a trivial matter being one in which he was in no degree interested.

How shall I describe Blanche Meadows ? I have already said that she was beautiful, and I almost think this must suffice. There are writers who will rattle off an inventory of



female charms with as much facility as a dealer in the slave-market would describe the various points of such a houri as that in Gerome's picture, where the Arab examines the woman much as an occidental would examine a horse. The reverence we bear to woman prevents us from attempting such a performance. There are critics who tell us that the Venus de Medici is knock-kneed, that a head so small as hers is almost brainless, and so on *ad nauseam*. All this may be true, we cannot say; but the Lady Blanche was not a Venus de Medici. Marble was never like her, nothing cold and lifeless could ever represent such an incarnation of Life. In height she was rather above the ordinary standard, but her exquisitely moulded figure prevented this being noticed. Her complexion was rather pale, while her eyes were black and lustrous. Tresses of dark hair were confined behind her head, tresses which, if unfastened, would have swept down to her waist like those with which painters have so generously endowed the First Mother, of whose personal charms the old legend has nought to say.

The look given to the candidate for office by the lady was longer—much longer—than that bestowed upon him by the Captain. Once only did Hugh Desmond raise his eyes toward her, while a burning blush betrayed how unused he was to such an ordeal as this. For a brief moment his dreamy look gave place to one of those eager flashes, and the sudden scintillation over, the drooping eyelids again fell before the lady's inspection.

"I have found Mr. Desmond more than capable of assisting Flowers," said the Earl; "and I hope the necessary preliminary to his becoming our choir-master will be settled to our mutual satisfaction."

"Mr. Desmond will not find us very exacting," said Lady Blanche; "I think we may confine ourselves almost, if not entirely, to a *Gloria* and some hymns."

"You will bear in mind, dear, that Mr. Desmond has but recently been reconciled to the Church, and that he probably may find its music rather foreign to him at first."

"We will," answered the lady, "first go to the harmonium, leaving Mr. Desmond to choose what he will play."

The examination proved a brief one. After Desmond had played some chants, a *Gloria*, and the sequence, "*Lauda Sion salvatorem*," he went to the piano, and selecting from

the music-books before him, showed that he really possessed musical knowledge of a high order.

"Thank you," said Lady Blanche; "we will not trouble you further: there can be no doubt of your perfect fitness for the post. Our choir is not a large one, and our requirements are not great. I should say, however, that you will find some of the children very stupid; they seem to have no idea of time, and their forgetfulness is amazing."

"Patience, however," said the Earl, "will effect marvels. Mr. Desmond, we will go and conclude the engagement."

Bowing low in response to Lady Blanche Meadows' "Good morning!" Desmond left the room with the Earl. On the stairs they encountered the Captain, and Hugh now found himself able to account for the vague feeling of having known that honourable gentleman in some ante-natal existence.

The Honourable Robert Meadows was the living image of the ancestor of the staircase, minus the claret complexion and the big wig. Lavater would have said that pride,—perhaps family pride,—lay at the root of both their characters. If the founder of a great house were a proud man two hundred years or thereabout ago, it is but natural that his descendant of to-day should be still more so. Now that the doctrine of Evolution is used to explain all things, from the material universe with its suns, planets and moons to the upgrowth of man from the ascidian, it may also be made to appear that the eldest son of the Earl of Guisborough ought naturally to be the very proudest scion of a not remarkably humble race. Was he not the son and heir of an Eighth Earl, and were not the Meadows the owners of a great estate and a noble name? The earldom was of comparatively modern date, but did not Sir Gilbert Meadows of Holmwood do knightly service at Poitiers? No mushroom house was theirs whose spawn had lain hidden in congenial dirt until some sudden influence had caused it to spring up in a single day. It was but natural that a Meadows should be proud,—proud of his name, of his sires and their untarnished connection with England's annals, but, above all other things, proud of the unshaken, unswerving fidelity of the family to the old religion as it was ere the lecherous Tudor cast his hungry glances at Mistress Anne Boleyn. At red Bosworth, none did Richmond truer service than Sir Harry Meadows, whose son

fled the court of Richmond's successor and contrived to live a peaceful life during the troublous, heart-searching years which followed the downfall of Wolsey. As we have said, no member of the family ever swerved from the old religion. "*Semper Fidelis*" was their motto, and sooth to say, in this matter of religion no other would have been so befitting.

It may be that the Earl of Guisborough's ready engagement of Hugh Desmond was facilitated by the fact of the latter being, as it were, a "brand plucked from the burning." So long as human nature is what it is, such considerations will prove all-powerful in influencing men's likes and dislikes. We do not question that any other applicant for the situation to which Hugh was preferred, had he been a Catholic from infancy, would have undergone a longer and severer probation ere he found himself admitted into the Earl's household. However this may be, Desmond was so far fortunate in that within a few minutes after his musical examination he was dismissed from his lordship's house on the understanding that within fourteen days he should make his appearance at Holmwood, the ancestral home of the Meadows, in the county of Rutland.

Has the reader ever applied for a situation and been successful in his suit? We, to whom it has fallen to indite this chronicle of nineteenth-century existence, have often undergone the ordeal of trying for a place. Once or twice we have been fortunate; but, alas for our luck! we have but too frequently been found among the rejected. Sages have written that there is more danger in prosperity than in adversity the jewel-headed. It may be so, but it is a form of peril which all are ready and willing to dare. To a mind untaught in the school of experience any sudden access of fortune is, however, likely to prove a disturbing element. Our hero was at an age when the equilibrium is easily destroyed,—if indeed in the plastic days of youth any mind may be said to be in *equilibrio*. After thirty,—the period of manhood, when, in medical phraseology, the epiphyses have become ossified,—the healthy man can retain his balance either in good or bad fortune. At nineteen, however, human nature is not so assured; "the world, the flesh, and the devil" have not yet had their innings; the cup of pleasure—as the novelists say—has scarcely, if at all, been raised to the lips; and the mind, or soul, or the Self, is as a sheet of parchment awaiting the

stylus whose lines, however faintly traced, will assuredly remain as long as life endures.

Hugh was a stranger in London, having as yet been scarcely forty hours in the great congeries of towns. Who and what he was the reader already knows in part, among other things, that he was but nineteen. This record is not one of saints and their doings,—we sincerely wish it had been!—but of ordinary men and women, albeit we introduce our principal as a recruit in the ranks of that great militant army, one of whose special claims is holiness.

The stranger who finds himself alone in London, if young alike in years and experience of men, had much better be alone in the Sahara. If he be poor in the superlative degree, and unskilled in the science of cadgerdom—why, then, God or Dame Fortune help him! if he have money in his purse may they help him all the more! Had Hugh Desmond been in the desert on this particular evening he would have had reason to congratulate himself. As it was, however, he was in that other Sahara, the wilderness of bricks and mortar, and, like most rustics, he had set his heart upon going to the play. Whither he went it boots not to enquire; let it suffice that on his return he was accosted by one of those frail nymphs whose hideous leprosy not even Romance can cover. Would that he had been older, more *blase*, or more Pharisaical, so that at least, like the priest in the golden parable, he might have turned up the whites of his eyes, as priests are wont to do when tempted, and have gone on the other side of the way.

For one brief instant he dallied with corruption, one moment he spoke the temptress, and—alas, that it should be so!—he may have been on the point of yielding to the unholy impulse. In that instant a carriage rolled along, and Hugh Desmond, as he lifted his eyes toward the passing vehicle, found his glance returned by the Lady Blanche Meadows. Tearing himself away from the mocking siren, the young man hurried back to his lodging.

And here ends the first chapter of this veracious chronicle. I, the chronicler, am but the medium by and through whom the narrative must be conveyed. Now and then, dear reader, I may choose to premit my editorial dignity, and, taking you into my confidence, address you as my bosom friend. Therefore it is that, while deploring my hero's momentary weakness, I venture to assure you that my experience of

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human nature convinces me that the Apostle did well to warn those who are most erect to take heed lest they fall. Verily, this world is full of snares and pitfalls, which only a St. Antony or an omphalopsychite can avoid.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEREIN WE FIND A SOLDIER, A SAILOR, AND SOME CHURCHES.

THIS history, like the Pentateuch, introduces *its man* full grown. Unlike Adam, however, our protagonist was once a baby, although, like the first Hebrew novelist, we have found it convenient in our first chapter to start with our little world in complete working order. Were this a mere novel or a romance we fear the critics would come down upon us for daring to introduce our hero to the world nineteen years subsequent to his introduction to the reader. Whether or not all history be what the dying Sir Robert Walpole described it as being, we neither know nor care. Inasmuch, however, as this history can only be written by us, we claim the right to follow our own humour in its narration, leaving the reader, if disgusted, to do with the narrative as he wills.

At two in the morning Hugh Desmond first saw the light. It was late in the month of September,—the golden harvest-month of merrie England,—when this addition to the quarterly return of births of the registrar of the little Devonshire fishing-town of Torweston-on-the-Sea might have been, and no doubt was, recorded by that official. Having been submitted to the secret initiatory process known only to doctors, nurses, and other ministers of Lucina, by which from time immemorial children have been introduced to this stage whereon their seven acts are played, he was forthwith displayed to an admiring circle of relatives and friends, and declared, according to an equally venerable custom, to be an uncommonly fine child. A critical eye,—suppose that of a bachelor or spinster of fifty,—might have cavilled at this judgment had it seen our hero a few hours after his appearance, lying by his mother's side and perhaps enjoying his first excursion in the flowery land of dreams. A little red lump of about fifteen inches long, with something whitey-brown, resembling the incipient whiskers of a tyro of seventeen, on the upper portion of its

surface, resting in a hollow of the pillow, was as much unlike one's preconceptions of what a fine child should be as anything in nature. But the nurse's fiat, together with the grandmother's endorsement, had gone forth, and, like the decrees of the Medes and Persians, could not be disputed or revoked. Leaving the little stranger to his first draught of human nature's great restorative, let us say something respecting his parentage.

Patrick Desmond, first mate of the good ship "Freedom," of Salcombe, was the eldest son of an Irish soldier who, about twenty-five years before, had been stationed at Torweston in command of a detachment of forty soldiers, to aid in suppressing those bold defrauders of England's revenue, the Devonshire smugglers. Lieutenant, or by courtesy Captain, Desmond had not been in Torweston six months ere he, like a true Irishman, fell in love with and married a certain Miss Leigh, whose only jointure was a pretty face. When his detachment was ordered to headquarters, the captain, being loth to leave Torweston, resigned or sold his commission, and with a light heart and not very heavy pocket resolved to begin life anew. He had some time before purchased of a retiring blacksmith his house, forge, and stock in trade, consisting of two sledge hammers, a bellows (said to have once cost, in some remote era, five pounds), an anvil, a few small tools, and a heap of old iron. With these assets, Desmond, doffing his scarlet tunic, set up as a complete master of the art and mystery of farriery, repairing grappels, ploughs, mattocks and spades, depending, we suppose, like Tubal Cain, upon his mother-wit to override any difficulty. At any rate, he soon made it apparent that he had a natural taste for working in metals, and almost every boy in Torweston came to him for mighty jew's-harps of his own manufacture, on which they twanged so incessantly that their mothers—had they only known the classics—might have deemed each archin an Orpheus bringing special music direct from hell. As time rolled on, Desmond found himself master of a good business, proprietor in part of a trading schooner, the "Freedom," and whole and sole owner and father of eight strong boys and two girls. Though himself a Catholic in religion, he quietly submitted to his wife's determination that the children should be educated in the tenets of Wesleyanism, so far as these might be acquired by a very irregular attendance at the Methodist Sunday-school.



The only time when the little, crooked, dirty streets of Torweston betrayed anything like animation was in the latter part of summer, generally in August and part of September. Not only did the leaders of the many religious sects of the town,—each, as became Christians convinced of their doctrines, disliking the other and agreeing only on some common ground,—select this season for their anniversary commemorations, when their respective Sunday-school children were regaled with sugared tea and crammed like sausages with saffron-dyed cake and buttered muffins, but these months were literally and truly the harvest months of all the fishermen on the south coasts of Devon and Cornwall. The pilchard—a small, herring-like fish—at this time of the year arrives in the western part of the English Channel. Swimming in mighty shoals, in number countless as the sands of the sea-shore, this little fish has long been the source from which thousands of families derive their support throughout the winter.

During the fishing season Desmond forsook his smithy, as did almost every tradesman along the coast forsake his proper calling, and became an earnest fisherman, toiling at the oar and tugging at the net with characteristic energy. Thus was he employed one September, about six years prior to the nativity spoken of in this chapter, as master of the seine-boat, "Prosperous." The season had been unusually active, and the town was alive with persons, male and female, young and old, engaged, or interested, in catching, landing, curing, buying or selling the wealth-producing pilchard. Whether he over-exerted himself, or whether it was really fatty degeneration of the heart, we cannot positively declare, but Garret Desmond, ex-cavalry officer, blacksmith and fisherman, the tallest and strongest man, perhaps, in Devonshire, fell dead, without a word of previous complaint, in the stern of his boat, the "Prosperous."

As a parent, Desmond, though affectionate, had been a martinet. After his untimely death the impetuous natures of his boys proved too strong for merely maternal restraint. Doubtless, the necessity imposed upon them of earning their own living was the principal cause that led to the separation of the boys. The eldest, Patrick, went on board the "Freedom," in the responsible office of cook; the others also became sailors, two of them in the Royal Navy. The young Patrick possessed a good portion of his father's proud spirit and



resolution. His progress on board the little schooner was so rapid that at the age of twenty he was second in command to the captain, by whom he was loved as a friend and respected as a good seaman. For this promotion the youngster was indebted only to himself, his mother having sold, soon after her husband's decease, the share in the schooner to which Patrick belonged.

All sailors and soldiers are susceptible to love. In the west of England Cupid is particularly busy, and indeed it may be said of the unions of the Cornish and Devonshire folk—as we think it has often been said—that the marriage baked-meats do coldly furnish forth the christening tables, so soon do the latter supervene upon the former. It is doubtless a wise practise to test your cherries before purchasing them, although there are certain markets wherein tasting is not allowed. We take it for granted that the Church does not encourage these peccadilloes on the part of the population, but along the south-western coast the Church of England exercises but little real influence. The fishermen are almost to a man Dissenters, Wesleyans, Bible Christians and Independents. Ever and anon, at regular intervals, a wave of revivalism sweeps over them, when backsliders are pulled up short and hundreds of new penitents brought to cry for mercy. The enthusiasm then manifested displays itself in a variety of ways, but its effect upon the young is supremely astonishing. A religious revival is indeed a *festival of love*, and we cordially commend the plan to the authorities of any district overrun with old maids. The fair daughters of the west—and they are the most beautiful among England's maidens—do not require long wooing, and when they love their reliance upon the fidelity of the loved one is implicit and immediate. Happily for them, their confidence is rarely betrayed. At times it happens that the delay of a weather-bound ship allows the christening to precede the bridal; but in a charitable community such things are not harshly remembered.

In almost all mythologies fishes are symbols of love. Whether it be Friga, Venus, or the Virgin of Galilee, every form of supernatural religion has been more or less ichthyologic, and it may be that some patient Teuton investigator, learnedly great in trifling matters, will one day be able to explain the subtle influence which impels all fishing communities to display excessive ardour in the direction of love and

religion. In such communities it is essential that the form of religion be a warm one, and surely nothing was ever better calculated to promote the spread of the system and doctrines of John Wesley in the west of England than the concomitants of "love-feasts," revivals, etc. Instead of dividing the sexes, as some repellent churches have done, the Wesleyans have delighted to bring them together in mutual worship, the result often being that,—and here we touch the ancient mythologies,—the fecund *ichthus* may very well be regarded as an appropriate symbol of a successful period of revivalism. The banks of Newfoundland can easily furnish an excellent figure for the banners of the great Salvation Army.

We suppose it is because they see so little of it that sea-faring men attach such great value to home life. Patrick Desmond, having fallen in love some years previous, married at the un-Aristotelian age of twenty-one. This event took place about four years before the appearance of the first pledge of mutual love, whose history we have undertaken to write. Long before Hugh's birth his father had been appointed master of the "Freedom," his predecessor in command, who was also owner, having retired to a snug cottage within sight and sound of the sea, and to the arms of a wife some twenty years less experienced in the seasons than himself.

Being the wife of a real sea-captain, Hugh's mother now began to occupy unchallenged a high place in the select society of Torweston. With a wholesome appreciation of the system of caste, the good people of the town were divided into four classes, each of which was in domestic economy, religion and dress, distinct from, and opposed to, the others. The *aristoi*, the pure Brahmans, consisted of the parson, the ministers of the Wesleyan, the Bryanite (or Bible Christian), the Primitive Methodist, the Reformed Methodist and the Independent Chapels, two retired sea-captains, an officer of the Coast Guard, the apothecary (who practised as general and only doctor), four rival grocers and drapers (all ardent politicians), a master-mason, one shipwright, a retired London chemist (of Torweston extraction and the scion of a really old Devonshire family), and, perhaps, a few others. The next order in the Torweston body politic comprised all the wives of sea-captains, proprietors of fishing boats and nets, private schoolmasters (three or four in number), and cultivators of small portions of land. The third class was also the most numerous, since it

embraced all the fishermen, sailors, and workmen of the place. Of course, the Pariahs were, as in right and propriety they should be, the *oppidi faces*, the paupers and poor-house inhabitants.

In the second of these classes the mother of our hero was, just about the time of his birth, the undisputed leader of fashion, and she was, therefore, one to be consulted by the trustees, ministers and superintendents of the Bible Christian meeting-house,—we really beg pardon, we meant chapel,—which she had, since her marriage, consistently and warmly supported.

Here it must be noted that in Torweston there was a due gradation among the sects in point of fashion and respectability. Thus the Wesleyans were the cream of the town—it is remarkable that the most salient feature in modern Wesleyanism is its great respectability—with trustees of acknowledged wealth and weight, who were all members of the first estate, the *aristoi*. The best house in the town was set apart for their minister, a house dignified by the suggestive name of The Cot, and with a green mound in front traversed by two ascending zig-zag paths raised at every angle formed by its acute deflections by three steps, each thirty inches long. The Cot itself was a prettily built cottage, having a gravelled terrace along its best side, and a small orchard and kitchen garden in the rear. Upon the terrace was a piazza or corridor, covered with what looked like sections of green umbrellas, supported by the backbones of herrings painted yellow.

The other sects never presumed to rival the Wesleyans in general respectability, though the contentions of the Bryanites, Independents and Reformers all arose from their each desiring to be what turfites call a good second. The meanest, because the poorest, religious body in Torweston was formed by the members of the Established Church. The majority of these were paupers, besides whom were a dozen farm labourers and three substantial tenant farmers from the farthest verge of the parish, who thought it their duty to be of the same religion as their landlord, the great squire of the next parish, whose word was law, he being a country magistrate, and whose income was thirteen thousand pounds a year, six hundred of which came out of Torweston under the name of the "great tithe," besides various other hundreds which he received by way of rent. These formed the general congregation on

Sundays, when the weather was fine; but it frequently happened that many Dissenters attended church at intervals when their own services were not very attractive. This they did to prove they were not bigoted and to pray,—which they did sitting, it being considered popish to kneel,—for the ultimate conversion of the poor parson who, with all his learning, was still wandering in the carnal wilderness of Sin. This was very charitable on their part, and proved to demonstration that they were not Pharisaical or puffed-up. So far did they go to show that they were free from spiritual pride, that twice every year they flocked to church in such numbers that there was barely room to sit in the high stalls with comfort. This was on the morning of Good Friday and on Christmas Day. True it was that on these days they had no services in their own chapels, because the observance of one day more than another, except the "Sabbath," was neither more nor less than flat Popery. Thus some were found to hint that they went to church on these occasions to gratify their curiosity; but of course this most uncharitable remark was never made except by a carnal and bigoted Episcopalian.

Having said so much of the church and its congregation, it behoves us to give a passing word to its minister. The Reverend Richard Lewis Griffiths was a Welshman of good family,—thirty or forty years ago the clergy of the Church of England were nearly all gentlemen, men who had grandfathers,—who, having taken the degree of Master of Arts at Oxford and a license from the Bishop of Exeter, was appointed curate in charge of the parish of Torweston, the incumbent having shown signs of insanity soon after having been deposed from the chairmanship of the Harbour Board by the coalition of the Wesleyan and independent members of that very influential corporation. With a good house and a small but picturesque lawn dotted with larches, firs and laurels, about a mile from the town, Mr. Griffiths might have been comfortable had his mind been free from the cares to which curates are martyrs, but to which few vicars, and no bishops, are subject. The revenue of the vicar of Torweston, collected yearly by his solicitor, was three hundred and sixty pounds. A successful pilchard season greatly augmented this, because not only were the tillers of the ground taxed but even the fishermen were compelled to pay one shilling and sixpence for every hogshead of fish they cured. Of this three hundred and sixty pounds

Mr. Griffiths was annually paid seventy by the above-mentioned solicitor, acting for and on the part of the non-resident incumbent. After paying the rates of his house—in the value of twenty pounds per annum—repairing his church and school-house, paying his cook and an occasional gardener, who was also the parish sexton, the curate may have had nearly fifty pounds a year to maintain himself with proper dignity as a Church of England clergyman should.

Twice a year did Mrs. Desmond, together with other members of the Bible Christian community or communion, wend her way to the grey old towerless church wherein Mr. Griffiths officiated. Twice a year she experienced great difficulty in finding in her book the place where the parson was reading, and twice a year was her bosom moved with commiseration for the benighted people who "prayed and preached from a book."

### CHAPTER III.

#### TWO PILOTS AND A SABBATH-BREAKER.

BY the time Hugh was six years old he was deeply read in the veracious and immortal histories of Jack the Giant-killer and Tom Thumb, and he had even made some acquaintance with Robinson Crusoe. Of course, among so religious a community, he naturally grew quite familiar with the equally veracious histories of Samson, Moses, Noah, and those other extraordinary Semites whose names we hear so often on Sundays, but to whose memory on other days we pay no more attention than if they were or had been so many Digger Indians. As for David, whom Renan calls a bandit, and for the right royal Solomon with his *Parc aux Cerfs* which no modern venator could cope with, the boy was too young rightly to comprehend the full meaning of their greatness and goodness. No true Christian thoroughly enjoys and profits by the lives of these holy persons until he has got well on into his "teens," when the understanding has adequately developed. On Sundays he had always—when it suited him—attended the Bryanite Sunday-school, when he was examined in a yellow-covered "task-book" or catechism stuffed full of Bible-texts without commentary, and then read aloud to his teacher—a fisherman and pilot who stammered—two chapters,

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one from the Old, the other from the New Testament. Whether it was that he disliked his teacher—who first made him laugh by his grotesque stutterings and then punished him for laughing,—or that, as is most probable, he detested the process of cramming with texts, is not certain; but it is undeniable that he was very irregular in his appearance in the Sunday-school. This indirectly led to his being altogether removed from Christian teaching; and this also changed for and to him the world and universe—for, reader of this narrative, seest thou not that both world and universe are in reality to all of us precisely that which they seem to be?

It was in June, about a month before the anniversary feast of the Bryanites or Bible Christians of Torweston, and they were all busy in preparing for the occasion. It was then, and doubtless still is, the custom for the influential or wealthy ladies of the sect to provide each a "table"—that is, cakes, muffins, tea, milk, cream and sugar sufficient to regale ten persons, on these festive occasions. Of course Mrs. Desmond was honoured by an invitation from the minister to give a table at the approaching fete. As it afforded a good opportunity of displaying her magnificence in the matters of table-furniture, besides that of utterly annihilating the pretensions of two rival ladies who aimed at being first in the congregation, and who were extremely pious, Mrs. Desmond graciously accepted the invitation, and forthwith began her preparations. The first thing to be considered was, naturally, her dress. She had summoned to assist her in deciding this momentous question a most respectable little dressmaker, who worked only for respectable families, and who owned the respectable name of Puce. The two had just decided that *the* dress for the occasion was to be blue or lavender-coloured silk, with little diagonal lines of white and black velvet buttons, when the maid of all work rushed into the room with the information that the "praicher," Mr. Catt, was even now ascending the stairs. Though Mrs. Desmond's house was always as clean as the cleanest in the Dutch town of Brock, that lady yet affected to be, what she certainly was not, about to clean up for the day, as the Rev. Charles Catt, simpering and smiling, came boldly into the room like one who knew he was welcome, and, placing his wide-awake hat and stick on the table, sat down by the open window.

Mr. Catt was a tall young man of about twenty-four, who,



having previously received a direct call from Heaven, had lately been appointed to minister to the spiritual necessities of the Bible Christians of Torweston. He was very popular among the ladies and had a face like a Creole's, lit up by two large, brilliant black eyes which continually wandered in their glances hither and thither, as if seeking something they confidently expected to find in some out-of-the-way corner. He could not have been looking for the grace of God, having found that long ago while a ploughboy, and having turned the discovery to great advantage. Had Mr. Catt known how to apply these two powerful pieces of ordnance he might have battered down not only the outworks but the very citadel of any young lady's heart in Torweston; but, as hath been stated in the last sentence, Mr. Catt's fire was never for two seconds directed to the same object. To be sure, scandal—busy even among so pious a community—asserted that a fair as instant in the grocery of the chief trustee of the chapel had made use of the post-office to convey to Mr. Catt a poetical epistle, the initial letters of which were artfully made to form the preacher's euphonious name, of which *magnum opus* only the first two lines are extant to tantalize the reader:—

“C att! whose orbs of living coal  
H ave cauterized Tryphena's soul!”

Black as were Mr. Catt's eyes, his hair was blacker. Talk of the raven: nonsense! Ten ravens and a ton of Whitby jet would not be so black as Mr. Catt's hair. Could a New York shoeblack succeed in the attempt to produce such a colour that artist would be an alderman in a year and in a fair way to attain the honours of Sing Sing. Mr. Catt's hair was not vulgar hair. Besides being black, it was wonderfully curly. Not only did the ends curl like curly hair in general, Mr. Catt's hair had more ends than the hair of common people, and each hair curled itself into a little ringlet about an inch long. People who were not Bryanites irreverently spoke of Mr. Catt's head as being negro-like and woolly. But these were carnal folk who did not reverence that gentleman, and for whom Elisha's she-bears had no terror.

“Good afternoon, Mrs. Desmond!” said Mr. Catt, just as sociably as though he were not a Bible Christian minister; “good afternoon. Hope you didn't catch cold, ma'am, returning from class-meeting last night. Dear me!” said Mr. Catt,



turning his living coals to where Miss Puce was sitting, "Miss Puce! How do you do, Miss! Hope I don't intrude!"

Mrs. Desmond hastened to assure him that his appearance in her house could never, under any circumstances, be deemed an intrusion, though it is possible that she made this statement with a little, just a little, mental reservation.

Miss Puce, who was not engaged to be married, though she had often "walked out" on a fine evening with a young fisherman, blushed at the reverend gentleman's address, and stuck her scissors in a zone of ribbon encircling her neat little waist like a cestus. Running his hands—which were large and bony—through his shining ringlets the minister continued, with an almost imperceptible nasal drawl:

"How are your souls, ladies? Do you ever feel as if the blessed effect of last winter's Revival was gettin' dead in your hearts? Can you still look upward? Ah, Miss! your heart is still like Fearo's, you were not brought into the sheepfold. Seek ye the Lord while it is called to-day. Ah, Mrs. Desmond, our friend is still carnal."

The reader may well be spared the conversation which followed, since, if he be any other Christian than a Bryanite Christian, he might think it something like blasphemy. Enough that the names most revered by sober Christians were spoken without reverence, and the deepest "mysteries" of theology descanted on without hesitation. At last Mr. Catt knelt down by his chair, and made an oration, which he called a prayer, addressed to a Being with whom he appeared to be on very familiar terms, and whose memory the speaker continually jogged while artfully repeating the phrase "Lord, thou knowest." When he had finished, and having groaned for the thousandth time like Sancho Panza in the colic, Mr. Catt took his hat and stick, and shaking hands with the two ladies—secretly squeezing their digits with a pressure purely Platonic, since it could not have been erotic, of course—was about to leave the room. Just then, however, little Hugh came bounding up the stairs, with the largest hoop of a fish-barrel in one hand and a dirty stick in the other. He stopped short on seeing the preacher, and, after a moment's hesitation, ran down the stairs again, pretending not to hear his mother's call to him to return. Surely no one can deny Original Sin who reads of this child thus early flying from a man of God!

"Mrs. Desmond," said Mr. Catt, "there are complaints

from the superintendent of the Sunday-school that little Hugh's attendance is bad. Mr. Dunn says he cannot give him a reward to-morrow."

Once a year the most deserving children of the Sunday-school received rewards from the school superintendent, Mr. Dunn. These rewards were generally little story-books, bound in cloth, containing tales of good boys who never played truant, told fibs, eat greedily, or fought with other boys. For a scholar not to receive a reward was indeed a degradation, and Mrs. Desmond felt it to be almost a premeditated insult to herself. She therefore replied, with great spirit, that the health of little Hugh demanded indulgence, that he often breakfasted in bed on Sunday mornings, and that if the superintendent carried out his threat she should deem it an affront to the family, and—as Prime Ministers say when out-voted—be led to consider the position in which it placed her. Disclaiming any intention of offending, Mr. Catt said he would see the superintendent and make all smooth again. And again shaking hands very warmly, the preacher concluded his visit.

If Mr. Catt really interceded with the superintendent, he must have found that official very obdurate indeed. On the Sunday immediately succeeding the preacher's visit to his mother's house, little Hugh was, strange to say, early at school. The task-book and chapter-reading were this day neglected, for it was the day appointed for the distribution of the rewards. Everything had been done to render the scene an impressive one. Below the pulpit—the school being held in the meeting-house—was a platform covered with green baize, on which were chairs for the trustees and teachers, and two tables whereon were piled the rewards. Some verses were sung to a merry air, the chorus being, "Oh, that'll be joyful, joyful, joyful, joyful!" after which the superintendent mounted the platform and proceeded to distribute the prizes. He was not a talkative man at any time, and even when he did speak he stammered, and this, perhaps, explains why he made no speech on this occasion. He merely read the name written on the fly-leaf of each book, called up the representative of that name, and gave him the volume with an injunction to be a good lad. Boy after boy had been summoned, book after book had been distributed; the pile was getting lower; and yet little Hugh's name had not sounded from the platform. At

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last his class-mates were, one by one, called up ; then the boys of another class were summoned, and still Hugh had not been asked to approach Mr. Dunn. There were twenty books now left on the tables—Hugh had counted them—now seventeen ; now thirteen ; now eight. Which of these was his ? There were now but four. Hugh was proudly calculating that the last of the pile, a bright, green-covered, tempting book, would be his, and revelling in the anticipated delight its pages would afford him, when lo ! it was gone, and the truth at last broke upon him, dispelling, as truth always dispels, the visionary castle he had been building. Poor child ! Well indeed for thee if this should be the only coveted prize thou art destined to lose ; well indeed if this should prove thy first and last renunciation !

And now some of the trustees and teachers made sundry little speeches commending the boys in general for their good behaviour and regular attendance. At length Hugh's teacher, the stuttering pilot, had the floor, and Hugh found himself an object of great interest, indeed. Wondering what it was all about, he began to listen to the orator, who was, as the child shrewdly conjectured, holding forth for his especial benefit. The speech being nearly ended, Hugh only caught the last few sentences.

"This is n-no-not obey-ay-ing the comman'ment. Lying in be-be-bed on the Sab-Sabbath, neg-lecting Sun-Sunday school is breaking it. Play-playing marvels (marbles ?) Sundays is a sin. Whosv-ever gives into th-th-that will lose no-not only the reward, but also lo-lose his soul. You must either be the Devil's child or God's."

Observing that general attention was directed to where he sat, little Hugh was sharp enough to think he had discovered the reason of his being unrewarded. Though he pretended not to feel at all hurt and strove to look as uninterested and unconcerned as possible, the boy was sorely grieved at heart. It was his first sorrow, gentle reader : marvel not that when school was over the child ran home, and, burying his face in his mother's lap, wept bitterly. Happy, indeed, are those who can thus find consolation in a mother's love, who can fly thither, as to a haven, from the scorn and contumely of the world. And when, in the full prime of manhood, reason forces us to renounce all lot and portion in the system of rewards which Bible Christianity holds up before us as bribes

to secure our allegiance to imposture, may we not wisely turn to Nature, the universal Alma Mater, in unwavering confidence, knowing that her mighty heart is throbbing with affection for each and all her children? She imposes no arbitrary requirements on us to be accepted without inquiry or investigation; but our reason sooner or later assures us that to follow Nature in all things is sure to result in the fulness of rational holiness, in soundness of body and mind. "Through the shadow of the globe" the race is sweeping onward to the glorious future when man will have shaken off authoritarianism and its rewards and punishments; and when we have learned to stand erect and walk forward without the idle incentives of celestial crowns and heavenly harpings, without the stultifying bugbears of infernal fires and eternal association with devils, then we shall consign the monarch's sceptre and the policeman's baton to the bonfire with which man will celebrate his emancipation.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE USE OF TEA DOES NOT PROMOTE TEETOTALISM.

A FORTNIGHT after the rewards had been distributed to the children of the Sunday school, the long-talked-of public tea was given. The chapel, as the meeting-house was called, was transformed as by the wand of some enchanter into a refreshment-room capable of administering inward consolation to four hundred hungry and thirsty persons. Fifty new deal boards, fresh from the carpenter, had been stretched along and over the pews, and even the *sanctum sanctorum* of the trustees' corner had been invaded by the zealous donors and arrangers of these tables of good cheer. Each board was covered with a snow-white linen cloth, and when seen by the light of countless composite candles the whole scene was most alluring. Mountains of saffron-tinted cake, sierras of buttered muffins, pyramids of bread-and-butter, lofty urns, refulgent tea-pots, knives, spoons, glass and china,—oh, it was magnificent. And then the flowers! Roses, lilies, tulips, geraniums, carnations, pinks, and pelargoniums—flowers red, white, blue, purple and yellow, all these and more were there. But they were all garden flowers. Of course they were. Nothing

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vulgar enough to grow in the green meadows and hedges of Devonshire could be allowed to stand on one of the tables. The Torweston ladies knew how to do it, and knew also what to admit and what to exclude.

If the preparations within were magnificent, the scene without in the chanel-yard was calculated to strike the spectator with awe. The vestry,—a little room in the rear of the chapel,—had been turned into an ante-room for the ladies, and now looked like a pawnbroker's office or a second-hand clothes shop. But the shawls, pelisses, and bonnets with which the little place was choked were in no danger of mildew, moth, or rust. There was no fire in the vestry, but the place was so hot that the very walls seemed parched and withered as though a thousand simooms or siroccos had been concentrated in his alembic by some cunning alchemist and then blown into the open door and window. The cause might have been seen by a glance into the yard. The vestry, though lower than the foundation of the chapel, was yet a part of that building. Its gables were in the same direction as those of the main edifice, but the place itself was so small that it could only be seen by a person standing in the yard. A huge fire had been lit outside the vestry, the walls serving admirably as a support for the ponderous blocks of wood and lumps of coal that flamed and crackled in the breeze. A long, stout bar of iron had been hammered into the vestry-wall some feet above the fire, and from this there hung a number of boilers and kettles designed to boil the water for the "cup that cheers." At one side of the fire stood a heap of coal large enough to overload a barge, at the other a pile of old ship-wood that would make a woodman stare. And while the fire flared and spluttered, and, when a puff of the gentle sea-breeze ventured to approach, threw up a shower of sparks, like a burning hay-stack or Vesuvius in a passion with the railroad by which it is profaned, men and boys were bustling about, some throwing on coal or billets, others taking away the boiling kettles, which were at once replaced by others of every size, shape and material—copper, iron and tin. Mr. Dunn, Hugh's teacher, was in command of the firemen, and, to do him justice, seemed as contented and busy as Vulcan or any other sub-terrestrial stoker. To compare so good a man to the Devil would be a most unrighteous proceeding, and, at the same time, a very inapt comparison, inasmuch as we understand

that for some years Satan's office of supreme fireman has become something of a sinecure, his whilome best patrons among Presbyterian and Baptist preachers having, for certain all-sufficient reasons, deemed it right to renounce their stock in the once powerful "ring" which controlled and dispensed the peculiar product of the lambent lake of Pandemonium. Yet a ship's cook in the tropics was never as hot as Mr. Dunn in all his glory. To a cool man it was terrible to see how this brave pilot and his subordinates dashed in and out among the flames and sparks and smoke as calmly as though they were clothed in asbestos. If the cool man had been a Bryanite it is probable that thoughts of the fate which befell the firemen of the great king Nebuchadnezzar would have rushed to his mind and then and there induced him to remonstrate with Mr. Dunn. But no cool man was there. All the spectators,—a pretty fair sprinkling of whom were hungry boys who hoped to earn by their readiness in carrying coal or water a slice or two of cake and a cup of tea when all was over,—seemed to be possessed by the Fire Spirit himself. They ran and danced and shouted as long and as loud as if the art of lighting a fire had been lost to the world, and Mr. Dunn was the Prometheus who had succeeded in bringing it from heaven. No wonder that the vestry was hot. The very sandstone blocks in the walls were beginning to crack, as though they had a mind to melt like lead but did not know quite how to set about it.

Not even his dislike of the pilot could prevent Hugh Desmond from going to see the fire. Stealing from his mother's side, our hero ran into the yard, where he stood and clapped his hands in admiration. Mr. Dunn at once caught sight of his delinquent pupil, and he seemed to think the occasion a fitting one to read him a lesson, using the fire as an illustration.

"A big fire, eh?" he cried. "Well, this is like what there is in the Bad Place for little boys who don't like Sunday-school."

If the rebuke and admonition were untimely, the reply, coming from so young a boy, could scarcely be deemed the retort courteous.

"If this be like hell, Mr. Dunn, you make a good presiding minister." Saying this, the boy ran back to the chapel, half afraid that he had committed some dire offence both against the rigid pilot and the high and mighty Prince Beelzebub



himself. As for Mr. Dunn, his slow wits had to pause ere they could fully comprehend the sting administered in the answer made to him. When at last he saw the meaning, his ruddy face grew suddenly redder, and for a moment he felt hotter than the fire he so carefully tended.

"Ah!" he said; "that boy is a sharper; he looks like his gra-grandfather, the H Irishman; I ho-ope he will turn out as well."

Inside the chapel, seated at the head of his mother's table, Hugh was enjoying himself immensely. Mrs. Desmond, intent on achieving a signal victory over the two pious ladies whose table was directly opposite, was busy ministering to the wants of the ten who, defying the allurements of the tables nearer the door, had seated themselves at her board. The good lady's face shone with pride, pleasure and satisfaction. The extraordinary exertions of the past month had proved successful; her table was the best in the room. Glass, china, plate and flowers were faultless. Her tea was the strongest, her cake the yellowest, her muffins the crispest, and her Devonshire cream the colour of gold. The two pious ladies were nowhere, and as full of envy as two pious ladies could be. The Rev. Charles Catt, the chapel superintendent, Mr. Dunn (a nephew of the pilot), two local preachers and their wives, four trustees, and little Hugh were enjoying the creature comforts at her table. Unquestionably Mrs. Desmond's pride was justified, seeing that the patricians of the Bible Christians thus honoured her board. At intervals, while the tea was cooling, all eyes were turned to Mrs. Desmond's table, where the lions were eating and drinking like ordinary people. When Mr. Catt spoke (which he often did with his articulation slightly impeded by cake and muffin) every ear was turned to catch the important sounds. When he directed his handsome eyes "of living coal" across the tables, scores of the fairest daughters of Torweston endeavoured to catch and return his glance. Oh, how much was Mrs. Desmond envied, criticized and hated for the superior attractions of her table! The two pious ladies complained of the heat. Of course they were hot, —envy kept them warm.

The Rev. Charles Catt, for a time subduing the fires of his lustrous orbs, devoted himself manfully to the work before him. In attacking the comestibles the reverend gentleman afforded a noble example to those around him. His face



fairly glowed with excitement and perspiration, as well it might, seeing that his prowess as a tea-drinker more than equalled that of Dr. Johnson. At his right hand sat little Hugh, who also was doing his best, although there can be no doubt that his enjoyment would not have been lessened had Mr. Catt and the local preachers been somewhere on a mission up the Congo, or elsewhere. The popular minister had disposed of six wedges of cake, four muffins, considerably modified the appearance of a plate of bread and butter, besides disposing of four cups of tea, before even the edge seemed to have been taken off his appetite. As soon, however, as his immediate necessities had been provided for, he graciously condescended to converse with those around him who, like himself, seemed inclined to desist from the fray. It chanced that Mrs. Desmond was, at this auspicious moment, employed in entreating the wife of one of the local preachers to take another cup of tea, declaring with great politeness that the lady had been drinking nothing,—nothing being just four cups of the best Souchong,—and Mr. Catt, who was not at all proud, saw that little Hugh was looking at him with a mixed expression of respect and apprehension.

"Well, Hugh," said Mr. Catt, "is not this a pleasant party?"

Hugh replied, with becoming humility, that it was. Perhaps he thought it would be quite as pleasant if no preachers had been present to damp his spirits. But he did not say so.

"Don't you think we are all happier here this evening than we should be warbling about the streets, or singing and getting drunk, like beasts, in the public house?"

"Yes, sir," said Hugh, very confidently, considering that, whatever knowledge he had of the streets, his experience in getting drunk in public houses was rather limited.

At this moment Mr. Dunn, looking very red and very sooty from his exertions in the chapel yard, approached to recruit his inner man before the tables were cleared. Wedging himself, with great courage and devotion, into a space of about nine inches between his nephew, the superintendent, and little Hugh, he soon contrived to attract Mrs. Desmond's notice. That lady, who, considering her health and general delicacy, looked as if nothing could tire her, did the honours of the table with much zeal and attention.

Mr. Catt, in spite of his eccentricities and his stammering,

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was a very remarkable man. Hugh, though he disliked him for his severity to himself, and ridiculed him for his bad reading, was far better satisfied to have him for his right-hand neighbour than to see Mr. Catt on his left. In person Mr. Dunn stood nearly six feet high, and he was gracefully though strongly built. His age was sixty-three or sixty-four, although he seemed to be little more than fifty. His walk was as springy and elastic as that of a young man of twenty, and his tall form was erect as a pine. From his childhood he had never tasted beer or brandy, nothing that could intoxicate had ever passed his lips. But every man has his hobby, and the pilot had his. Had he been content to ride it with less noise and ostentation, Mr. Dunn's favourite horse would have made him a pleasanter neighbour and a more agreeable pilot, though perhaps not so famous a man. Mr. Dunn's hobby was Teetotalism. He rode it everywhere. On the coast of Devonshire, thirty miles east and west of Torweston, he was known as The Teetotal Pilot. He was President of the local Band of Hope, in which capacity he enlisted Teetotal recruits, attended Teetotal meetings, and corresponded with the United Kingdom Alliance. Conscious of the defect of speech under which he laboured, he rarely ventured to speak in public except before an audience of his fellow townsmen. But on these occasions he spoke with much warmth and even grace. He had never married, but he dwelt with his sister and two nephews,—both of whom were Teetotalers and stammerers in a less degree,—in a high wooden house on the northern wharf of the harbour. His life had ever been held up as an example to the young, and his word was never broken or called in question. Apart from his Teetotalism, on which he was as intolerant as one of Cromwell's Ironsides, his heart was open and his manners were unassuming and gentle.

"We were talking, me and Hugh,"—Mr. Catt's grammar was of a kind now growing obsolete,—"of temperance, Mr. Dunn. My little friend was saying that our meeting was more attractive than the public house."

The reverend gentleman had very kindly given our hero the credit of this proposition. This shows either his great humility, or that he was, like some other great men, a little absent in mind.

"Did he say so?" Mr. Dunn put his hand on our hero's head, and looking in his face with a pleasant smile illumining

his weather-beaten features, he repeated, "Did he say so? Why, Hugh, my man, why do you not join the Band of Ho-pe! Wait; I have a tic-ticket in my pocket; take this pencil and sign your name in that corner, over the little black line."

The pilot, busy in doing the work he thought it his mission to perform, permitted his voice to rise above the subdued tone proper to tea-parties. In his eagerness he had almost forgotten to stammer, so that all in the vicinity of Mrs. Desmond's table became aware that Mr. Dunn was about to enlist another follower beneath the banner of Temperance. Hugh once again found himself the centre of observation in the meeting-house. His mother, elated at the idea of her son taking the pledge before so many people, came forward to encourage him.

But our hero was not so ready to write as Mr. Dunn expected he would have been. Mrs. Desmond, knowing his handwriting was not so excellent as his reading, put the pencil between his fingers, and asked if she should steady his hand. To her surprise he answered that he did not want to sign at all.

The two pious ladies smiled at each other, and then held up their hands and shut their eyes.

"N-not sign!" stammered Mr. Dunn; "and why not, Hugh?"

"Will you not become a Teetotaler?" said Mr. Catt.

"Because," said the boy, "father says it's all nonsense; and if I cannot keep sober without it, writing my name will do me no good."

This declaration was a great effort for a shy child like our hero. Its effect was instantaneous. Basam was not more astonished when addressed by that useful and well-known animal which costermongers patronize and Jesus loved, than was the Teetotal chieftain at Hugh's outburst.

"Hugh," he ejaculated, "you are a nau-naughty boy, and your father is—"

"What is his father, Mr. Dunn?" asked Mrs. Desmond,—it must be confessed in a tone of carnal indignation. "I hope you have nothing to say that can hurt him in good name or common respect?"

"Hush, Mrs. Desmond" whispered Mr. Catt. "Mr. Dunn means no harm, I am sure." The minister,—blessed oleaginous man that he was,—had poured oil upon the troubled waters.

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"I have only this to s-say, ma'am," said the pilot,—"that if your-your hus-husband m-m-means to bring up his child as a dru-unkard, he is a dis-g-g-grace to-to the town."

This was petroleum upon the fire. Mr. Dunn, having wrought himself into a state in which he perspired freely, arose from the table and went out to his dying fire to cool himself again.

On looking to where the pious ladies were standing, Mrs. Desmond was in time to see the lifting of the hands, the shutting of the eyes, and the look of righteous horror and pity on all sides turned toward her delinquent offspring. It was enough. Like an unpopular cabinet minister, she had considered her position. On the next Sunday morning Hugh was sitting by his mother in a large, white-painted, horse-box-like pew in the old parish church of Torweston, listening to the Rev. Richard Lewis Griffiths, who was reading with due solemnity a sermon on Baptismal Regeneration.

The die was cast! Mrs. Desmond was a member of the Established Church of England. Her revenge was complete.

And here, reader, were I a theologian or a moralizer, I might indulge in various sage reflections upon the mysterious ways of Providence. It does seem strange that so much machinery should have been put in motion merely to throw a woman and her child into the bosom of the Anglican Church. Yes; but I pray you to reflect upon the great mystery of Revelation; to bear in mind that countless millions of human beings have suffered and been condemned; that Nature has been convulsed, and the God of Nature nailed to a cross for hypocrites and priests and mercenaries to scorn and for Semites to spit at; and all merely that a portion of that God's creation should be rescued from the malignity of one fallen angel. Truly, man's methods are not those of the Christian's Deity.

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## CHAPTER V.

### WHEREIN GOD AND MAMMON VANQUISH LOVE.

**I**T is, I think, Juvenal who makes the Roman people exclaim that they had made Fortune a goddess. Seeing that the modest citizens of the Empire City were wont to retail divine honours almost as freely as in the United States a

new President dispenses his patronage, I do not doubt that the blind old lady obtained her goddess-ship upon easy terms. I would, however, fain inquire who first appointed for mankind the standard by which it measures its heroes? Occult and modest Heroism, how often art thou in our very midst, in attic, or cellar, or cottage,—on the crowded street, on the treacherous ocean, or Death-defiantly standing firm and resolute with hand pressed on the throttle of the Iron Horse,—*cheval de bataille* of our modern civilization!—oftener still dost thou walk noiselessly along the wards of the hospital where typhus, variola, or the grim tyrant Cholera number their victims by the score. More rarely art thou present on the tented field of war, save when perchance some Hampden, Warren, Kosciusko, or Bozzaris goes forth like Leonidas, to show the world how Liberty incarnate must yield to death ere it can triumph. Thy favoured dwelling-place, however, thy chosen haunt is where gaunt Hunger and squalid Vice are looked down upon by the twinkling stars that shine alike impartially on cabin and palace, and whose mystery is alike unknown to the unpoetic, unabstract discoverer of asteroids and to the infant who has learned to call them angels' eyes. Who shall say that thou dost not prefer the Magdalenes and the Pariahs to the pure, immaculate Zenobias and the Olympic and Pythian victors whose brows have been crowned with wreaths and whose ears have drunk the seductive wine of ode, strophe, and antistrophe? It may even be that the poor country curate was something of a hero, or that he had within him some of the materials of which heroes are compounded. Mompesson and George Herbert were both mere parsons, but if self-denial and the practical living of that high altruism which so many writers of this age have praised so beautifully and forcibly be heroic, then these men were heroes, even though their heroism were prompted by motives which wisdom no longer recognizes as being well grounded. Some years before the date at which this life-story commences, a fisher-boat was anchored outside a Devonshire haven, and immediately deserted by its crew, who carried with them the alarming intelligence that one of their mates lay dying on board the craft, stricken by cholera. Along that coast, peopled by men whose courage and daring were celebrated throughout the world, there was found no fisherman or sailor bold enough to board ~~that~~ little boat. Yet one man there was on whose ears the call of duty

did not fall unheeded. This was the curate, Mr. Griffiths, who sculled his dingy out of the harbour, and administered what solace and refreshment he deemed needful to the poor sufferer, and who afterwards with his own hands consigned his body to the sea. The story did not find its way into the papers, but its lesson was not lost upon a people who, though they did not love the Church of England, knew how to honour and respect gallantry and devotion to duty wherever shown.

In person Mr. Griffiths was tall, yet not remarkably so, and as slenderly proportioned as sculptors represent Apollo, although no eye could discover about him anything angular or thin. In early manhood he must have been even beautiful, and now in his fortieth year he was much more likely to inspire affection than the majority of the young men of the century, who appear to know no intervening period between youth and bald-headed age. To know him it was but necessary to see him in church or among the school-children: in the one place he was the teacher conscious of the priesthood he considered of divine authorization; among children he was himself a child. Soon after his ordination, Mr. Griffiths had fallen in love, and, with the ardour of his Cymrian blood, had proposed, was accepted, and was preparing to lead the lady to the altar, when an unforeseen difference of opinion led to his renunciation of the bonds of Hymen, and to an action for breach of promise. In matters marital the trite old saying has it that like and unlike are always bound together—this being perhaps Nature's anti-homœopathic nostrum for the cure of love. In this case the axiom would probably have been fulfilled, and two persons of antithetical tastes and disposition would have been united had the marriage been performed.

The evening before the morning appointed for the wedding found the young curate strolling with the bride-elect down a green Devonshire lane. The setting sun had by its cunning alchemy converted the western sky into a sea of molten gold; but the beauteous sunset, the perfume of honeysuckle and sweetbriar, and the never-ceasing roll of the distant sea were, each and all, unheeded by the lovers. Busy thoughts of a bright and happy future engrossed their minds, and were striving to find expression in words. They were basking in the sunlight of life's meridian hour—the radiance that is never repeated, the light of a pure first love—the only pure one. Such passions are the true Platonic, and where they are once



kindled they abide until death,—except when, as often happens, marriage has reduced them to a *caput mortuum*, the chemical residuum of love.

"Alice," said the curate, "there is yet another blessing, another addition to my cup of happiness, which I shall find in you."

"Nay, Richard ; if you continue your praises I fear I shall grow vain. But what new perfection have you discovered ?"

"Darling, you know my income is but small, and that I have had during the winter to trench upon the eight hundred pounds left me by my father. Our poor are very unthrifty ; and though in summer their earnings are very considerable, in winter they are well-nigh starving. With your two thousand pounds God will enable us to preserve my little flock from extreme privation. Happy meed, to become the treasurers and custodians of Christ's poor."

"Yes," said Alice, "yes, Richard ; we can be wisely, moderately charitable. But we should do wrong to encourage the fishermen and their wives in their unthrifty ways. We must not offer a premium to wastefulness and improvidence."

A slight look of pain passed over the young curate's handsome face ; it went, however, as quickly as it came, and left him serene but thoughtful. He no longer looked into his companion's eyes ; his gaze was steadily bent upon the far-off aureola that marked where the Lightgiver had gone to rest. Another and a more powerful love now occupied his mind,—the love to which from childhood he had dedicated himself,—the love of the poor and lowly for whom, as he believed, Christ had died.

"Alice," he said, after a brief silence, "I have often thought how great are the responsibilities attached to the possession of money. Thus, my love, I have sometimes almost wished that your wealth had not been so great. We will, however, ask God's grace so to dispense it as to merit the reward of the good servant who used his lord's talents well. What with the poor, the church, and the school-house, we shall, I doubt not, find our wealth only too limited."

"But, Richard, we must, I fear, curb our generosity, until at least you have obtained a vicarage,—Lord Cherston was your crony at Christ Church, and he has many good livings in his gift,—or until my father's decease. In future, our first duty will be to ourselves ;—the parishioners have the vicar



and the wealthy families to organize any charitable relief that may be required to supplement the poor-rates. In fact, dear, my father was so apprehensive of your too generous spirit, and of your inability to resist the petitions of our poor,—whose unthrift and waste in the summer months cannot be too severely condemned,—that he determined to keep my two thousand pounds within my own control. It is not my desire, dear Richard, although, as I know your too confiding disposition, I cannot think my father to blame."

The brow, face, and neck of the young Welshman flushed scarlet, and then grew bloodless as those of a corpse. The lady was an Englishwoman, and doubtless spoke by a kind of hereditary instinct such as becomes those who are to be the mothers of a nation of shop-keepers, a nation that has offered as holocausts to Mammon oceans of human blood in every quarter of the earth. Such an instinct, however, had no correlative in the curate's nature. Within his veins flowed the best blood of the Principality, and the great god of Commerce which has demolished the battlements of so many feudal strongholds and invaded so many aristocratical homes in much the same manner as Jove entered the palace of Acrisius, had not come near him. His father was a Welsh squire, who had studied but never practised medicine; his two brothers were, one a captain in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, the other a chaplain in the Navy. The world in which he had been educated, the world in which he had dreamed, prayed, fasted, and laboured, was long anterior to that of the nineteenth century, and the commercial jargon of economy with which we—whether storekeepers, bankers, or bishops—are now so familiar, grated on his ear like the friction of a saw and a file. The provident foresight of the lady's parent, and still more her calm, business-like tone of approval, awoke in his mind a strong revulsion. It was as if Owen Glendower or "Hotspur" Percy had been confronted with a Rothschild, a Vanderbilt, or the archetype of a member of the Congress of the United States or the British Parliament. The Alice of yesterday was the creation of his imagination, the idol had been shattered, the gold had become clay.

Three months afterwards the Reverend Richard Lewis Griffiths was, in an undefended action for breach of promise, condemned in damages—three hundred pounds and costs.

Thirteen years after this episode, Mr. Griffiths, now in

priest's orders, was appointed to Torweston as curate-in-charge or *locum tenens* during the illness of the vicar. In those thirteen years he had officiated in very many of the parishes of Devon and Cornwall, making friends wherever he dwelt, earning the respect of those who differed from and disliked his religious tenets, and even awing and temporarily subduing the lawless and flagitious. His majestic bearing, his long nut-brown beard and moustache, and the unmistakable air of true worth and gentlemanly instincts,—now, unhappily, so rarely seen even in the highest places,—all made him a marked man. The humble labourer, as he wended his way home under his faggot of firewood, forgot to be churlish when the “parson” gave him “Good-night!” and the stiff and starchy Independent,—more Calvinistic than John Calvin the Burner himself,—condescended almost to smile when he appeared. Neither to her great wealth nor to her learning is the Church of England so much indebted for the respect of the masses as to the fact that she numbers among her servants so many men like this. No other church or religious denomination can here challenge her supremacy,—tousured heads, cassocks, birettas, and white neckcloths may abound, but nature's gentlemen are rare.

The secession of Mrs. Desmond to the Established Church made nearly as much stir in the religious circles of Torweston as is caused throughout the British Empire by the “going over” of a bevy of young marquises or embryo parsons to the Church of Rome. Like those more eminent converts or perverts,—the reader can choose which designation he may consider the proper one,—she had little to renounce but a great deal to accept, though even in this she early discovered that in her new church the “rule of faith” was so very elastic that it included various not altogether reconcileable beliefs. She had no penance to make, no creed to recite or abjuration to declaim. She changed her religion as easily as she did her bonnet, merely by walking on Sundays in a direction opposite to that which she had formerly pursued. No politician ever changed sides more gracefully or had better reasons for commiserating his quondam friends. Of course it was not pique but simple conviction. She had been christened in the church,—she was too young a neophyte to use the word baptized,—married in church, and always thought the church was, after all, “the right place.” Having thus asserted her hereditary

right to church membership, it followed that in renouncing the Bryanites she had only been returning to her allegiance. The ratiocination was good enough for a change of religion,—much weaker logic has been heard from metamorphosed politicians and from Radicals converted to Toryism or Opportunism by the magic accolade.

In due time Hugh was admitted into the church school, where he continued until he was twelve years old. Here he rapidly acquired the elements of reading and writing, although his arithmetical reputation was at a very low degree. His father, determined to prepare him for a sailor, advised that he should now be consigned to the more pretentious academy of an elderly mariner, celebrated for his ability in teaching the science of navigation. In his youth Captain William Topp had been somewhat of a rakehell and debauchee. After inheriting an annuity of sixty pounds he, however, renounced his vocation and set up as an "independent gentleman." Whether he grew tired of idleness, or whether he found his annuity less elastic than he had imagined, was best known to himself; the town, however, soon learned with surprise that Captain Topp and his sister—a spinster lady who also enjoyed an annuity—had simultaneously been converted to the doctrines of John Calvin, admitted to fellowship by the leaders of the Independents, and—were going to open a high class school. For once rumour belied her reputation; the report was true. The school was duly opened, and the master had no reason to complain of a lack of pupils. The chief dishes on which Captain Topp fed the rising genius of Torweston were arithmetic, English history and navigation—Miss Topp devoting her attention to imparting the rudiments of French.

Captain Topp and his new pupil contrived, on the whole, to get on well together. A constant attendance on the ministrations of Mr. Griffiths had resulted in making Hugh's mother a zealous churchwoman. But her zeal was comparatively frigid to that of her son. From the first the clergyman had been struck with the boy's intelligence and extraordinary love of reading. The library at the vicarage had been thrown open to him, and among a mass of miscellaneous church literature the boy had eagerly devoured the historical tales of Gresley and others. The very air he breathed seemed to be ecclesiastical, and Mr. Griffiths was so delighted that he even proposed to Mrs. Desmond that he should be allowed to adopt her son and

to train him for the priesthood. For a moment gratified pride swelled the mother's bosom, but "the love stronger than death" intervened to prevent the separation.

Captain Topp was somewhat of a disciplinarian. At times he was wont to demonstrate to any refractory pupil, by means of what suspiciously resembled a miniature cat-o'-nine-tails, that he was "master of his own ship." Like some other ship-masters, however, he would frequently unbend and relax the severity of his discipline. Especially was this the case when he had before him the class in English history. The text-books were, for the juniors Goldsmith, for the seniors an abridgment of Hume. On these occasions the worthy pedagogue was anxious that no opinion in opposition to his own views of civil and religious liberty should pass unchallenged. In dealing with the Stuart monarchy he was vehement in his denunciations of the alliance between Church and King. Allowing, nay, even inviting, his pupils to express any thought that occurred to them, it was not long before Captain Topp discovered that though all his other pupils were Roundheads there was at least one pronounced Cavalier among them. The schoolmaster, being somewhat of a fanatic, laboured earnestly to eradicate from Hugh's mind the seed of High Churchism, but with little or no success. Respect for Captain Topp doubtless restrained the boy in the discussions, but he himself thought he was generally the victor in these disputes; and there can be no question that the ex-mariner was much more zealous than argumentative. The other pupils, naturally enough, took to their respective homes an exaggerated report of the verbal combats between Captain Topp and young Desmond, and public opinion soon averred that the boy was a "regular Roman Catholic."

Mr. Griffiths was one afternoon,—it was a half-holiday at Mr. Topp's—at Mrs. Desmond's house, when Hugh came down from his little bedroom, a sanctum devoted to reading and scribbling, with a copy of "Jacob Faithful" in his hand. After blessing him with great solemnity the worthy priest looked at the book and asked the boy whether he liked it or not.

"Yes, sir," answered Hugh, "but there are many sentences I do not understand. The Dominie talks Latin, and I do wish I could read it."

"Mrs. Desmond," said the clergyman, "it is a pity that

Hugh should have to go to sea. Shall we try to make something better than a sailor of him?"

"With my consent, Mr. Griffiths, he shall never venture on the water. As yet he is but a child, and I only send him to Mr. Topp's that he may learn all he can; but he shall never go to sea."

"I think, Mrs. Desmond, we can teach him something better than navigation. When next I come down, I shall bring him a Latin Grammar, and he shall take daily lessons from me."

To the young mind bent on learning such promises as these are not lost sight of or forgotten, and Hugh took care to remind Mr. Griffiths that he had promised to teach him Latin. A fortnight later a copy of "King Edward VI.," fresh from the shelves of Albemarle street, was placed in the hands of the delighted boy. Navigation and Mr. Topp, latitude and longitude, right-ascension and declination, were each and all forgotten. Hugh Desmond was Mr. Griffiths' daily pupil, sharing his meals, his walks, and his prayers; declining, conjugating, and parsing; learning at one and the same time a language older than Christianity and to love and reverence the "Anglican Branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church."

Dear reader, knowest thou whether at such turning-points of life the course we follow be taken by chance, or whether,—as many of the best and reputed wisest of our race have deemed,—the feet of the traveller be directed by a Conscious Being, in whom we and the universe are comprehended? However this may be, is it not certain that we live in the shadow of the mile-posts of our youth? Surely, this much is certain, although the Silence responds not to our questioning and we hear but the echo of like questions that have been asked since man became a thing of mind.

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## CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH CUPID BORROWS AN ARROW FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL.

THE days of our youth, alas, how fleeting they are! In after years they are with us only as a memory. With sorrowful pleasure we recall, when the back is bent and the hair silvered, the bright and sunny hours when care and anxiety were almost unknown, the joyous days of innocence

and purity with their sweet associations of sunny meadows, shady woods, and rambles by the river or by the ever-heaving sea. Whether we regard ourselves as pressing onward to immortality or as drawing near to the Nirvana of endless quietude, there is not one who does not at times sigh with Gerald Griffin for the "dear old times when we were young and free." Our after life is often a long and dreary record, a bead-roll of errors, sorrows, and turbulent passions; youth is a fragrant, flower-pied lawn, over which Memory may roam at pleasure, finding little to vex or grieve the mind.

Up to his seventeenth year Hugh Desmond had been but a pinnacle following in the wake of the parent ship. In some respects he was almost a recluse, and he had not yet begun to experience the adolescent impulse to oppose the parental restraint as a positive tyranny. He often absented himself for days from Mr. Griffiths', spending long hours alone with his books, poring and dreaming over the speculations of schoolmen and theologians, the names of whom are rarely heard of now. This disposition of his son Captain Desmond had unintentionally fostered by his habit of purchasing, in every town he visited, old books in every language and on every subject. Of late his visits to Torweston had been rather more frequent, and each time he had been more and more surprised at the attainments and learning of Hugh. At the boy's own request he spent much money in old books, and the bookstall that bore an aged, yellow-leather covered volume would be sure to be ransacked if Captain Desmond passed that way.

At times Mr. Griffiths almost repented having interfered with Hugh's education. The boy had devoted himself so earnestly to mental culture as to render it more than doubtful whether he would be capable of struggling with the world. The gossips of the town called him the Hermit, and shook their heads, with a gravity worthy of Lord Burleigh, at the rare appearance of the lad in the streets. Mr. Dunn, the pilot, furnished a clue to the chatterboxes which served to explain much that was mysterious in the boy's character. The veteran teetotaler publicly proclaimed his conviction that Hugh had fallen a victim to the insidious snares and wiles of Mr. Griffiths, the parson, who had, according to the sagacious pilot, succeeded in making a Roman Catholic of the boy. This theory was generally accepted, much to Mrs. Desmond's disgust and indignation. Then, as now, the rural population of

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England looked askance and suspiciously at Romanists, and doubtless the good mother was correct in apprehending that this calumny might seriously impede her son's start in life. The waters of the English Channel, to the ears of those who live thereby, murmur a strain no less patriotic than the wavelets of Salamis whispered to the citizens of Athens; they tell of the brave days of old, when the embattled forces of priestcraft and despotic fanaticism found swift and sure destruction at the hands of the Englishman.

The columns of the county paper were every week closely scanned in Torweston, and as Hugh wrote almost every week a long letter to this organ of Devonshire opinion he gradually became a person of note in the district. These letters were mainly antiquarian or theological, and, as those of the latter character were very High Church in tone, they greatly strengthened the Torweston belief in the Papistical doctrines of the writer. A few of the Illuminati of the place,—the Independent minister, Captain Topp, and a Mr. Calfton, a draper and haberdasher who studied politics and lectured on religion,—ventured to enter the arena of epistolary warfare with our hero. Their efforts were unsuccessful in a remarkable degree. Hugh's command of language and wonderful references to authors and volumes, of whose names his opponents were ignorant, completely routed the allied powers, and thenceforward the young student, although often hotly engaged with some unknown adversary, found no one of his fellow-townsmen to controvert his speculations. They were, if anything, proud to find their little parish honoured by the weekly letter, and when they read the epistles of Hugh's opponents and saw the respect therein paid to his controversial powers, they, too, began to praise and admire his genius, although they loudly and vehemently reprobated his Popish errors.

About this period Mr. Griffiths was offered a rectory on the border of Exmoor, the living being in the gift of his whilome college friend, Lord Cherston. Almost the last thing he did in Torweston was to procure for our hero a situation as assistant master in a grammar school in an inland town about twenty miles away. The youth himself had avowed a desire to go to St. Augustine's, Canterbury, to prepare himself for a missionary; and subsequently this plan had been renounced, and a nomination had been procured to the preliminary examination for the office of Paymaster's Clerk in the Royal

Navy,—this scheme being brought to nought by an untimely attack of brain fever, which left Hugh too weak and feeble for the customary examination. Mrs. Desmond warmly seconded the clergyman in advising her son to accept the situation offered him. While her husband lived she knew Hugh would never want, but some time ago she had discovered a small, button-like formation in the left breast, and a visit to the county infirmary had revealed the dread fact that she was suffering from cancer. From that moment she knew that she stood face to face with Death. Day by day went by, and the mother neglected no duty, omitted no item of the routine of her little household. All went on as usual, as though no grim spectres were ever present to the mind's eye of the guiding spirit of the house. His mother's serenity prevented Hugh from attaching grave importance to her ailment. For him there were the same solicitude, the same smile, the every-ready kiss. Only, as the shadow of the inevitable parting grew more and more distinct before her did the mother's affection for the only child of her heart become more manifest in every action, word, and tone: the love that Death could not terrify allowed no sigh, no falling tear to darken the few weeks or months of intercourse that, as she knew too well, remained to the mother and the son.—They tell us of the Spartan women,—pshaw! As our race advances farther and farther toward the recognition of man's true place as the highest cognizable thing or being in Nature, how miserably savage and brutal appears the love of the Spartan mother in comparison with the affection burning within the bosoms of the mothers of to-day!

At length the pinnacle was adrift on the ocean of the world; well for it should it prove that the inexperienced steerer was apt to learn how to control its movements. If living were merely drifting, how easy it were to live!

The grammar school at Culm Tor was founded by John Drake in the reign of the sixth Edward. By no means a rich endowment, the principal, George Toynbee, B.A., was glad to supplement his meagre income with the salary paid to him as actuary of the local Savings Bank. During the last quarter of the scholastic year Mr. Toynbee was little other than a mere presence in the class-room, his magisterial desk and his

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cerebrum being alike well-nigh exclusively occupied by a huge ledger and numerous piles of foolscap, blue-ruled, and with certain columns on the right hand capped with the potent letters "£ s. d." Hugh Desmond, despite his disadvantages of youth and inexperience, succeeded fairly well in his office. In Mrs. Toynbee he found a willing and ready auxiliary. She appeared to pity the fragile-looking, tall, and handsome young man who contrived on the whole to govern so ably sixty or seventy youngsters, many of whom were very rough diamonds indeed; and so, whenever the principal was absent at the bank or involved in the mazes of computing the savings and interest thereupon of the farmers and tradesmen of the neighbourhood, either Mrs. Toynbee or her niece relieved the young assistant by assuming the control of the junior classes.

The Toynbees were very devotional High Church people. In his deportment, conversation, and weekly communication in the paper, Desmond was so excellent a Churchman and Tory that it is not surprising the childless schoolmaster and his wife came to love him. The rector of Culm Tor was one of those conscientious ministers who held that when the Prayer-book prescribed that the order of morning and evening prayer should be said "daily throughout the year," it meant what it said. These week-day services were fairly well attended, except in harvest, when the labourers were kept late in the fields. Every evening a party from the grammar school was at church, and though it sometimes happened that Mr. Toynbee was detained at home by the all-absorbing ledger and foolscap, his niece, Miss Edith Allyn, and the assistant master were always present. After "evensong," Mr. Toynbee sometimes unbent himself over the chess-board, those ubiquitous accounts not unfrequently co-operating to his ignominious checkmating by Hugh.

Edith Allyn was a year older than our hero. Her mother, Mrs. Toynbee's sister, had long been belle-regnant in North Devon, and the young scions of the county families were astounded when the "Northcote Lily" became the wife of the poor curate of Morchard Cross. True, the clergyman was of good family, but then the Lily had had offers from baronets, squires, high clerical dignitaries (including even fox-hunting Jack Russell himself), a Cabinet Minister, and others. All and sundry of these men of mould and substance expressed wonder at the lady's choice, but old Coppleston, of Umberleigh

Manor, who had hunted Exmoor when George the Third was king, sagely declared that experience had taught him that women and foxes invariably yielded when the Church cried Tally ho !

The Rev. Charles Allyn died three years after his marriage, leaving but two memorials of his existence behind him in his infant daughter and a very able treatise on "Materialism Refuted by a Consideration of the Structure of the Body and the Faculties of the Mind." His widow did not survive him quite two years, and almost with her latest breath she consigned the little Edith to the guardianship of her sister, Mrs. Toynbee. This good lady was at least nine years older than her sister ; she had never been a belle, and probably had never received an offer of marriage before the principal of Culm Tor grammar school made a proposal. Childless themselves, this excellent couple gladly accepted the trust, and most sacredly did they fulfil the obligation. The child was carefully, though not showily, educated at her uncle's expense, Mr. Toynbee being resolved that the funded property which was her inheritance should not be trenched upon until she was of age. From her mother Edith also inherited the gift of rare beauty,—a dainty little figure, exquisitely moulded, large brown eyes, heavily fringed and shaded, and tresses of long chestnut hair, which the sunlight irradiated into the richest, warmest bronze. Ordinarily quiet and reserved in demeanour, at times she fairly bubbled over with merriment, her eyes, beneath their long lashes, betokening a fervent and passionate nature.

Next to a half-holiday, the junior boys dearly loved to see Mr. Toynbee plunge headlong into the troubled waters of the big ledger, and to have the assistant master assume the management of the upper forms. On these occasions Mrs. Toynbee and Edith came to the class-room, and the juniors gladly welcomed the change. Young Fevre, the surgeon's son, would, at such times, excel his former self as a perpetrator of witticisms, while Glasson, the abnormally dull boy, was encouraged to creep out of his shell. The youngsters thought Desmond proud, and they knew instinctively that he did not possess the almost parental solicitude and sympathy in their well-being which the true preceptor should always have. Though free from tension, his discipline was steadfast and certain, and boys generally prefer a master less vigilant and

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circumspect though perhaps occasionally much more stringent and exacting.

One afternoon—the ledger being, of course, on the meridian,—young Fevre was proposing to Edith a series of time-honoured “corkers,” as he termed them, such as, What would be the result, mathematically defined, of the collision between an irresistible body in motion and an immovable post on a plain?

Miss Allyn smiled,—she could hardly avoid laughing,—at the gravity with which the youngster asked his ludicrous question.

“Nonsense, Fevre Junior; do you propound such absurd conundrums to Mr. Desmond?”

“Mr. Desmond,” replied the boy, “is no joker. He looks you through and through, while he does not seem to be thinking of you. If I tried to make him laugh, the joke would become an icicle on my lips. I wonder if he has bargained away his laugh, just as Peter What’s-his-name did his shadow? Glasson, however, made him smile the other day.”

“Indeed,” said Miss Allyn; “then it would seem that Master Glasson, whom you especially, Fevre, treat so superciliously, is successful where you are afraid to venture.”

“None of the fellows have tried to rival him, Miss Allyn. I am sure that, so far as I am concerned, he is heartily welcome to the pre-eminence.”

“Prettily expressed, Master Fevre; do you study all these pretty sentences over night? May I request the favour from your Sarcastic Serenity of hearing wherein Master Glasson so distinguished himself?”

“’Twas during the exam. on the reign of Elizabeth. Glassy was asked why Babington conspired, and he answered that it was to make the Pope king of England. Mr. Desmond fairly smiled, and told poor Glassy that he was nearly as well qualified to write history as some other imbeciles who had dragged the Popes into every machination against English liberty. When I told this to Phil,”—who was Fevre Senior,—“he said that Mr. Desmond was writing in the *Mercury* against the Reformation, and that some of the Seniors thought he was more than half a Romanist.”

“Nonsense, Fevre,” replied the young lady, “Mr. Desmond is a sound Churchman, and I am surprised at such idle gossiping among the seniors. Surely you ought to know that

English Catholics condemn much of the popular prejudice against the Bishop of Rome."

"Yes, Miss Edith, I know," answered the boy; "but pa says that some of these High Anglicans are carrying on so fast that before long they will subvert the old Church altogether. Do you know that the rector has adopted the eastward position, and that Mr. Monk, the churchwarden, is going to write to the bishop about it?"

"I hope Mr. Monk will have more sense, Favre Junior; but let us mind our own business; I see Mr. Toynbee looking in this direction."

As the months went by Hugh Desmond became almost like one of the Toynbee family. In Mrs. Toynbee he almost recognized a second mother, while his feeling toward Edith he had never analyzed. Though fond of solitude, he often accompanied her in her walks, and his greatest delight was to sit near her every evening while they practised on the harmonium various melodies from "Hymns Ancient and Modern." Callow fledgling that he was, he never thought of love. Hitherto his pulses had never vibrated to the touch of passion; the Celtic temperament lay underneath, however, and religious fervour and eroticism are seldom kept asunder. Women have been called the devout sex mainly because of reasons that are readily explained by physiology; with both sexes, however, the same natural impulses, uncomprehended, often find utterance in fanaticism until Nature restores the equilibrium by providing for the normal exercise of functions which cannot safely be neglected or despised as mere brutish instincts. The youth of sanguine and ardent temperament,—*robustus puer*,—may find in athletic exercises an outlet for the passion which would otherwise exhaust and consume him like a secret fire,—*quas narrare pudori est*. The very excesses into which he falls are condoned and mitigated by the general healthfulness and mental equipoise which they induce. They are generally Nature's means of correcting the overweening egoism and ideal arrogance of the period of storm and stress, and they rarely leave behind them the brand of dishonour, or serious grounds for regret or sorrow when the plastic age has given way to maturity. Utterly unconscious of the passion which the saints whom he so much admired had done their utmost to fan into raging volcanoes within their own bosoms by withdrawing themselves from human intercourse, Desmond's

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association with Edith Allyn seemed to be one of pure friendship and almost of brotherhood. With a temperament no less high-strung and "poetic," Edith, however, possessed a woman's intuition, and while carefully refraining from an analysis of her own feelings, she knew well that her interest in the young teacher was essentially different from that of a sister or friend. Zenobia, of Palmyra, who is said to have,—like some modern ladies, but for a different reason,—loathed her husband's endearments, would probably have passed unscathed at heart, "in maiden meditation fancy free," through such an experience. Edith, however, was not a Zenobia, but a warm-hearted, glowing English maiden, by nature loving and to be loved. As the tendrils of the vine, responsive to the warm breath of Spring, entwine themselves around the prop to which natural impulse has made them incline, so did her friendship for Desmond, though unacknowledged even within her own mind develop into affection.

Whether or not "concealment, like a worm i' the bud," would have long preyed "on her damask cheek," I, to whom it has fallen to narrate this life history, cannot determine. I know that in fashionable, character-delineating novels the fine ladies and gentlemen are represented as forming their attachments conformably to a settled rule or principle, the progress of their affections being traceable in the gradual evolution of mental affinity as manifested in the region of Art,—the cultus of Shakespeare and the musical glasses. Unfortunately, neither Hugh nor Edith were sufficiently acquainted with the canting jargon which has now usurped the position formerly occupied by more solid, if less ostentatious, acquirements, to admit of such a genteel expansion of mutual regard. Accident, however, provided a key to unlock the hitherto unexplored recesses of that nature which is so mysterious in its loftiness, so amazing in its kinship to the lowly and the base.

It chanced one evening that Mr. Toynbee, who had found it impossible to attend evensong, and whose application to his accounts had so fatigued him as to leave him unfit for the mental exertion of chess, requested Edith to read the Psalms and Lessons. The Church of England is honourably distinguished above all the churches in Christendom by the moderation, judgment and even reasonableness of its members. While believing, as their Articles of Religion declare, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation,"

they show themselves sensible of the truth that no inconsiderable portion of that Scripture is much more natural than refined. At the period, however, when this Church was rescued from the meshes of the net of falsehood and fabrication thrown over it by the Papacy in the Dark Ages, the Calvinistic extravagance was powerful enough in England to impose its own odd theories of inspiration on the minds of both priests and people. The Church, emancipated from the superstitions of Rome, became somewhat of a victim of Bibliolatry, and for centuries,—that is to say, until the appearance of a higher criticism,—little or no discrimination was exercised between the moral portions of the Bible and those other sections which might well and profitably have been kept in the background as being calculated to promote neither the interests of morality nor a temperate religion. Thus it happens that the one book in the world which demands careful expurgation to be fitted for popular use is thrust into the hands of young and old, to supply food for the prurient imagination and to withdraw the veil from Isis long before prudence would counsel its removal.

Reclining in his well-worn easy chair Mr. Toynbee seemed a somewhat bald-headed saint in broadcloth. As Edith repeated the last *Gloria* at the end of the Psalms, a close observer would surely have mistaken the schoolmaster's reverential inclination for a somnolent nod. Long ere the chapter from the Old Testament had been read, Mr. Toynbee was indubitably asleep. At this moment his wife gently withdrew from the room in quest of her scissors, leaving the reader only Desmond to profit by the Apostle's counsel. He sat with his left elbow on the table, his cheek just resting on his fingers, his eyes being directed to the Bible from which Edith was reading. A small carriage-clock ticked on the mantel, the vibrations being apparently directed by an ambition to attain a speed of six tickings to every respiration of the sleeper in the chair.

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me : It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

Raising her eyes for an instant, the reader became aware that Hugh Desmond was regarding her intently, and a burning blush suffused her features as the prompt intuition of an intellectual woman told her that she was herself identified with the mental process awakened by the Apostle's warning in the brain of her auditor. But a moment their glances met

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and the eyes of the bashful maiden reverted to the book ; but for these two the hand of Fate had in that brief moment struck an epoch on the dial of their lives. Hurriedly and in a subdued voice the reading went on :

" Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

" Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence : and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

" The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

A little more than this the abashed and all too-conscious maiden essayed to read. Gentle reader, you and I, sophisticated and case-hardened by long years of experience and discipline, could have heard Paul's opinions upon matrimony as stolidly as though they referred to the Delian Problem of the duplication of the cube. Edith Allyn, however, was an unsophisticated country girl, who had probably never sat in a box at a theatre simulating unconsciousness while the lowdest jests and double-meanings of Shakespeare were recited by actors who refused to "mutilate the bard." Above all, she even *felt* the incidence of the keen gaze of those dark, meditative eyes. Rebelling or protesting against their influence, she endeavoured to encounter them with the composure of unconscious.

Alas, the attempt was not a success,—once again the <sup>1</sup> as betrayed the sensibility which gave them birth,—and Edith read for the first time, in a book no less veritable than all the Bibles of all the religions of mankind, the revelation of a man's vehement, glowing love.

Reader, were this a fashionable novel, I might now surfeit thine ear with love speeches. Inasmuch, however, as it is only what it professes to be,—a life-history,—I have but to state that on this eventful evening no such speeches were made. Moreover, honoured reader, I may now impart to thee mine own impression and belief,—namely, that when Love's revelation is first made to two young human hearts, the tongue is very liable to a sort of temporary paralysis.

Edith Allyn closed her Bible, bowed to Desmond, who had also risen from his chair, and then left the room. Mr. Toynbee awoke from his slumber, expressing his apprehension that much of the last lesson had been lost by him. Mrs. Toynbee, returning with her work-basket, glanced at the clock with

some surprise that her absence had been long enough to allow the Lessons to be read and a discussion on Freemasonry to arise between the gentlemen.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN WHICH KING SOLOMON PLAYS THE DEVIL.

THE days were drawing on toward Christmas, and the boarders at Culm Tor were already preparing for the vacation. The annual "exhibition" had taken place, the prizes and commendations been duly distributed, and the scholarship at Oxford most honourably and brilliantly achieved by Philip Fevre, whose construing of the oration, *Pollakis men ede egoge*, in the third book of Thucydides, had elicited an emphatic "Well done!" from grim old Fullmer, a Fellow of Exeter, who conducted the examination. Among the Juniors, Glasson had also distinguished himself by an essay on the "Armada," the perusal of which left Mr. Fullmer in doubt whether Pope Sextus, Philip II., or Elizabeth commanded the Spanish fleet.

On St. Thomas's Day, Mr. and Mrs. Toynbee had accepted an invitation to take tea at Dr. Fevre's, the surgeon being elated at the academical triumph of his eldest olive branch. Desmond had passed the afternoon in completing his preparations for departure on the ensuing day. His books and papers were carefully packed in a small sheet-iron trunk, all but one or two quarto sheets on which some music had been neatly copied. Through the half-opened door the strains of Edith's sweet voice came borne on the tones of the harmonium, like an evening zephyr borne to shore on the gentle undulations of the sea. The tune was one that Desmond knew well,—  
"St. George,"—

"Yea, faith can pierce the cloud  
Which veils Thy glory now;  
We hail Thee God before whose Throne  
The angels prostrate bow."

"A silent Teacher, Lord,  
Thou bid'st us not refuse  
To bear what flesh would have us shun,  
To shun what flesh would choose."

As the last of these lines met his ear, the young man knelt beside the trunk he had just filled, and, reverentially crossing himself on brow and bosom, ejaculated : " From all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Good Lord, deliver us : amen ! " Taking up the music, he scanned it in great apparent doubt and hesitation, as though undecided whether to tear the paper, or to place it beside his other belongings in the box. Suddenly, however, his manner changed, and he proceeded toward the drawing-room with the manuscript held loosely in a roll. At the foot of the staircase he paused, struck with something approaching to awe at the spirit of absolute relinquishment and submission thrown by Edith into those pathetic lines of Charlotte Elliot :

" Though dark my path, and sad my lot,  
Let me be still and murmur not,  
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught—  
' Thy will be done.'

" What though in lonely grief I sigh,  
For friends beloved no longer nigh,  
Submissive would I still reply,  
' Thy will be done.'

" If Thou should'st call me to resign  
What most I prize, it ne'er was mine ;  
I only yield Thee what is Thine,  
' Thy will be done.' "

Waiting until the hymn was ended, Desmond entered the room. It wanted nearly an hour to evening, and the twilight still afforded enough light for Edith to read, even had she not known all the familiar tunes and hymns in the volume before her by heart. As she sat there in the shadowy gloaming of a winter eve, surely Desmond may be pardoned for his involuntary conception of St. Cecilia. A more proficient æsthetic, however, would have seen in the oval face and gracefully poised head, the large, full, liquid eyes, and wealth of waving hair rather a model for an Ariadne. Much depends upon the point of view, and upon whether the observer be an anchorite or a man of the world. The short vermilion lips whose flexures form the line of beauty are, to the former, appropriate rims to the fountain of prayer and praise ; while it is undeniable that others, who do not lay claim to the odour of sanctity, pretend to regard them as possible sources of something sweeter still.

"Mr. Desmond," said Edith, "can you tell who originated the fiction that senior boys are the representatives and preservers of order? The upper forms are all away at Dr. Fevre's,—Philip would take no refusal,—and I do not think the old house was ever more quiet."

"Nearly all the juniors are also absent on leave, Miss Allyn. They all have 'chums' among the day-boys, and Mr. Toynbee advised me to release them for a few hours, conditionally on assembling at evensong. Indeed, I think we are almost alone in the house, except for the servants. Will you pardon me for adding that I thought this a favourable opportunity for presenting a petition?"

"A petition, Mr. Desmond? Is it duly set forth in that dangerous-looking manuscript? Let me ask you to waive the formality of presentation on bended knee."

Poor little heart, why did it throb so tumultuously beneath the close-fitting habit? and why were the Juno-orbs so interested in the ivory keys of the harmonium? Ah, reader, I question whether there be in all the pharmacopœia a drug of sufficient potency to suppress the throbbings of a maiden's heart when he who has made it captive seems about to claim the prize.

"I am afraid you will laugh at me, Miss Allyn; but I have ventured to arrange some music to words. You will find the notes a strange medley of various chants and fragments of anthems. The words are, however, very beautiful; and even though you laugh at the accompaniment, I do so hope you will sing it."

Edith took the paper, which the young man had been rolling in a direction contrary to the original with a view to straightening it by virtue of the effect of opposing influences. As she slowly read the words, the colour rose to her cheeks, for surely never did human language more sweetly, mellifluously whisper of ardent affection!

"Mr. Desmond," said Edith, "I fear you will have to suffer an infliction if I attempt this. Uncle always says my quantities horrify him if I only read a Latin quotation in the papers. Last Sunday the leader in the *Guardian* contained a passage from the Confession of Augsburg, which I undertook to read, as Uncle very much wished to hear the article, which was strongly anti-Roman. I had got as far as '*disputatio peperit*,' I think it was, when Uncle groaned in

\* Reader  
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anguish and said, 'That will do, dear; skip the Latin, you pepper it rather too much.' Can we not effect a compromise, however? Let me run it over once, and then we will execute it together,—that is, if you are not angry enough to execute me for my wretched performance."

Once, twice, thrice did Edith Allyn practise the music before her. The arrangement was scarcely a scientific one, and she knew by heart every source from which it was derived. While her fingers pressed the keys, however, she was mainly intent on the meaning of the words below the bars. The sentences burned their impress on her ready brain: they were, indeed, to be as fateful to her as were the finger-traced words to King Belshazzar.

"Are you ready?" she asked, without raising her eyes.

"Yes, if you please," was the reply. Desmond stood with his left hand resting lightly on the harmonium, his tall form being slightly bent as the deepening twilight rendered the handwriting rather indistinct. His rich, deep voice thrilled through the maiden, and the breath that rustled her tresses seemed sweeter than an aromatic breeze.

"Quam pulchra es, Amica mea! quam pulchra es.  
Oculi tui columbarum,  
Capilli sicut greges caprarum  
Quae ascenderunt de Galaad.

"Sicut vitta coccinea labia tua,  
Et eloquium tuum dulce,  
Tota pulchra es, Amica mea,  
Et macula non est in te.

Veni de Libano, sponsa mea,  
Veni de Libano, veni.

"Vulnerasti cor meum, Amica mea,  
Vulnerasti me.  
In uno oculorum tuorum vulnerasti,  
Et in uno crine colli tui.

Veni de Libano, sponsa mea,  
Veni de Libano, veni."<sup>\*</sup>

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\* Reader, if thou hast a Bible near at hand, turn to the fourth chapter of Solomon's Song, and thou wilt discover therein the source of Desmond's anthem. Verily, Solomon's canticles were prompted by the most original and enduring of all religions.

It is no disparagement of Edith's knowledge of the Bible to affirm that she did not seem to remember that the words sung by Desmond were drawn from that source. During the chanting she ventured once to look up at the singer to encounter a gaze of eager affection. Edith's religion was steadfast and unwavering; a true daughter of the Church of England, her piety and devotion were lasting, not of a nature to quickly burn out or be consumed. Desmond, on the other hand, was a fanatic, his mind being in a continual excitation over his ideal Church of the first three centuries. I do not doubt that as he stood there he, in some subtle manner, identified the church with his beautiful companion, and, with the not unusual combination of eroticism and enthusiasm, apostrophized the lady whom he admired and the Church he so idealized and loved.

"Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair! Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee!—Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes!" For a moment, when the singing had ended, Edith wished that she were at Dr. Fevre's. How ought she to receive this declaration of love?—it was, perhaps, very romantic to be wooed in such a manner, but the situation was considerably the more awkward and perplexing through being so commingled of poetry and sentimentalism.

"Thank you!" said Desmond: "The first ordeal being over, I find my diffidence changing to audacity. Miss Allyn, I invite my doom; before you go you must let me have your verdict."

Edith had left her seat, and Desmond while speaking placed himself directly in front of her, his manner showing some solicitude lest the verdict he asked for should be refused.

"My verdict?" answered Edith: "do you not exaggerate the beauty you praise so highly?"

"Here there can be no exaggeration, Miss Allyn. Willingly, gladly do I offer all that I have, all that I may be found capable of, to this beloved one. But, tell me, are not the words somewhat too,—what shall I say?—too voluptuous, expressive of an emotionalism disagreeable in this connection?"

"Mr. Desmond, I was not prepared for this,—I cannot feign indifference; yes, I love you!"

The fair speaker had hidden her face in her hands, which were resting on Desmond's arm. As for our hero, he stood

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like one benumbed or paralyzed. For a time his voice seemed to fail him, he appeared to undergo an internal struggle, and when he spoke his tones were strangely tremulous and husky :

"Love me? Miss Allyn, Edith! Great God, what a terrible misapprehension! Edith, I am vowed to celibacy; the words we have been singing are King Solomon's apostrophe to the Church. I thought you would have recognized them."

Almost ere he knew it, Edith hastened from the room. Up the staircase she rushed, seeing absolutely nothing as she went, eager only to find a shelter, to be alone. Past the little oratory on the landing where hitherto she had carried every little vexation and annoyance, laying them all at the feet of Him whose eidolon hung there within the apse. Like the hurt fawn, Edith sought instinctively a covert where she might collect her thoughts. Something dreadful had happened,—she had made a horrible mistake, and had impetuously acted an unmaidenly, indiscreet part. How it all was she wanted to remember,—alone in her own apartment her mental confusion would subside and she would then be able to recall what had transpired. The door, as she remembered having left it, stood partly open, and rushing into the room the agitated maiden ran to the bedside and, falling on her knees, buried her throbbing forehead in the clothes.

Hugh Desmond soon recovered from the surprise and astonishment produced by Edith's unexpected acknowledgment. However devoted to celibacy, his heart throbbed with delight as he thought of the revelation made to him. That he himself loved Edith he had long known but too well for his own internal peace. His ideal of perfection, a life of asceticism, had not, previous to his arrival at Culm Tor, seemed so difficult of attainment. He had imagined it by no means a hard thing for a man, aided by Divine grace and fortified by the sacraments of the Church, to live an eremitical life even amid the bustle and turmoil of the nineteenth century. He had striven to "mortify his members upon earth," and in the simplicity of his heart he had fondly thought he had won the victory ere he had even crossed swords with the adversary which the saints of all ages had found most formidable and unsparing. And now, as he stood there sorely perplexed and confused, there suddenly flashed across his mind the memory of some old-world story of two ardent lovers ruthlessly separated in youth and who afterwards met only to discover that one was a veiled

nun,—the “bride of Christ,”—the other a tonsured priest. He remembered that these two had once more interchanged vows of affection,—not of that Eden-born, carnal affection which induces a man to “leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife,” making of the twain “one flesh,” but rather vows of a sublimated, rarefied affection, not “of the earth, earthy,” making of these two kindred souls one unified, super-terrestrial spirit, released from carnal lust and retaining only the sublimity of love. He would see Edith once more before his departure, and they, too, would interchange vows of this nature.

With Desmond decision and action were almost coincident. He would but consign the unlucky anthem to his trunk, and then he would seek Edith and persuade her to go with him to the oratory and plight their troth of sanctified, non-concupiscent, ascetic love before the image of the Crucified One. Hardly had he entered his room when he became conscious that he was not alone. Evening had now closed in, and even adjacent objects were quite indistinct and nebulous. Vision, however, was scarcely needed to inform Desmond of the true cause of the half suppressed signs of mental anguish that he heard. Gently, timorously, but with a tumultuous heart, he crossed the apartment. Yes, it was Edith. In the agitation and shock given to her modest nature, she had, after ascending the stairs, gone to the right instead of left of the little oratory, and had thus mistaken the apartment. Even yet her brain was in a whirl. What could she do? how would it be possible for her and Desmond,—whom she now thought of with a sort of terror as though he were of a superior order of beings,—to live together under the same roof? Above all, what must he think of her? How distinctly she remembered the many slight indications he had, in discoursing with her uncle, given of a secret persuasion that man's highest interests were retarded by the modern system of intercourse between the sexes, a system so radically opposite to that which obtained of old among people directly favoured and instructed by God. Henceforward these prejudices would be accentuated, and—terrible thought!—he might even come to regard her as the Eve that had tempted him to forego the joys of Paradise.

A hand was laid upon the bowed head, and rested there caressingly. Ah, reader! I greatly question whether Platonism ever exerted so mysterious an influence over a troubled mind!

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She did not venture to raise her head until the firm, strong arm lifted her up.

"Miss Allyn, dear Edith, why are you so agitated? I was going to ask you to grant me leave to tell all I feel and desire; but I am glad to find you here."

"Here? Oh, Mr. Desmond, am I not,—? Surely this is my room?"

"Nay, dearest, it is mine. No, you cannot fly away again leaving my tale unheard. Be seated, dear one,—nay, you must."

The strong arm encircled her waist, and she was compelled to sit beside him, full of a nameless dread that both were on the brink of a precipice.

"Edith, you have told me that you love me. You have also shown me the state of my own heart;—I have long endeavoured to hide it from myself. I love you Edith: God grant I am not sinning in my love!"

"Mr. Desmond,—oh, Hugh, let me go to my own room, for Heaven's sake! to-morrow we will explain all to each other."

"To-morrow I leave Culm Tor: Edith, you must hear me."

Kind and gentle reader, I hold you in great respect and esteem, so much so that I verily believe I could put myself to some slight inconvenience solely on your account. The details of that explanation of Platonic or spirit love I cannot, however, narrate. Whether or not I myself know them, it skills not to enquire. Let it suffice thee, therefore, to be told that Mr. Toynbee and his pupils did not meet the assistant master at evensong. On returning to the school, Mrs. Toynbee found that her niece had retired with a severe headache, while Desmond was absent, probably to complete his arrangements for departing on the morrow.

Night has fallen over Culm Tor, and the stars are shining brightly on the old grammar school of John Drake's foundation. Mr. and Mrs. Toynbee and the boarders sleep the sleep of the innocent and the weary; but prostrate in the oratory Edith Allyn keeps a vigil of tears and woe. The rays emitted from the most refulgent star in the southern firmament strike full on the thorn-crowned head of the crucified, and almost render it possible to read the legend above it—*Idc ho Anthropos*,

"Behold the Man." Whatever the crucifix, however, may suggest to the believer, whatever it may whisper of comfort and consolation, depend upon it, reader, that the young man who is by this same starlight pacing his room in self-accusing torture has begun to learn the great lesson of human history,—that creeds and philosophies, faiths and systems, invariably succumb when brought into collision with Nature, which conquers even when these creeds and systems are said to be supplemented by that which a Kempis tells us is the "special gift of God." It must be so,—the monk himself experienced it,—"*Natura inclinat ad creaturas*," though he adds "*sed Gratia trahit ad Deum*."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### IN WHICH MOTHER AND SON FIND PEACE.

HUGH Desmond did not, at the end of the vacation, resume his mastership at Culm Tor. His mother was rapidly drawing nearer to the dread portal through which all must pass, and for those two there could be no thought of separation until Death, the Arch-severer, came between them. In replying to Hugh's intimation that he must resign, Mr. and Mrs. Toynbee wrote kindly, sympathetic letters, in which they expressed an earnest hope that in time their young friend might again become one of their household. That he had also written to Edith may be inferred from the following passages from a letter received by Desmond about a month before his mother's death :

"Your allusions to the future,—your hopes and desires,—compel me to make one brief reference to the past. You remember that monition in *Hyperion* : 'Look not mournfully into the past ; it comes not back again.' Let us both determine to make of that past the foundation of an honourable, unstained future. For myself, I rely confidently on the means of grace to which the Church bids us have recourse ; and, Hugh, whatever I may be called upon to renounce, I shall never think of as a sacrifice. Even as I write, the evening's lesson affords me present strength and consolation for all that yet may be. 'Thou hast forgiven the offence of thy people, and covered all their sins. Thou hast taken away

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all thy displeasure, and turned thyself from thy wrathful indignation. . . . I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me, for he shall speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, *that they turn not again.*'

"Last night aunt said that she missed you very much, as she had come to regard you almost as one of ourselves, and she added that possibly you might return to Culm Tor within the year. Uncle answered that this was very doubtful. He said that beneath a calm exterior you carried a strong, impulsive, volcanic nature, and this would certainly operate upon and fashion your future. I, too, have thought of this, but I am not qualified either to warn or counsel. All that I dare venture to do is to beseech you to avail yourself of the Help that is always nigh, and to ask that you refrain from imposing upon yourself projects and schemes for the future which the Divine Will may not sanction. I will not write of my own hopes and desires : I feel that for both of us our present duty is to submit ourselves wholly to the direction of God."

Hugh's mother died in April. May we not term that a happy parting between mother and son where the sacrifice was accompanied by that mysterious offering of dedicated bread and wine which both of them firmly regarded as the Divinely-ordained instrument by which Christ's passion was continuously applied for the redemption of human souls ? The three days that intervened between the death and the burial were mainly passed by the young man in the chamber where all that was mortal of his beloved mother reposed. There were not wanting friends and neighbours to offer him shelter and companionship in this time of sorrow, but Hugh preferred to be alone with his dead. After the funeral he continued this solitary existence, living as it were *en plein surnaturel*, his days,—and no small portion of his nights,—being devoted to pious reading, meditation, and prayer. Besides having frequent recourse to the penitential Psalms and a prayer of St. Augustine in which the Divine chastisement was *almost* asked for, he fasted twice a week,—on Wednesday and Friday,—on a very different plan to that of the priests satirized by Peter Pindar, who—

"Order their simple flocks to walk with God,  
And ride themselves an airing with the Devil."

How all this would have ended it is hard to say ; perhaps

the result would have been mental alienation, had it not been for the timely arrival of Captain Desmond from the Levant. Hugh's announcement of his mother's death had reached his father at Smyrna nearly three months ago, but when father and son met, their sorrow was revived with all the poignancy of a present and immediate affliction. Hugh, however, shrank from revealing his inner life, perhaps because he instinctively felt that on these matters a wide, an impassable gulf lay between him and his father. Henceforward his devotions and fastings were veiled, and in a short time he entered heartily into his father's plans with respect to his own future. These ultimately took a definite shape, and it was decided that Hugh should establish a school for boys in his native town. Desks were made, maps, etc., were ordered, and the front parlour was rapidly transformed into a school-room. Before the Captain went on another voyage his son had secured twenty pupils of the middle class families of Torweston, and good Mr. Topp and his sister found themselves confronted by a rival Dionysius. Desmond's school succeeded fairly well, and the young pedagogue himself began to find pleasure in instructing some of his pupils in branches of learning scarcely ever before thought of in Torweston. His prospects in this direction, however, were not improved when it was seen that he had formed a close intimacy with a half-pay lieutenant in the neighbouring parish, a gentleman who had suddenly acquired much local notoriety by publicly announcing in a Romanist weekly paper issued in London, his readiness to confer certain freehold lands and buildings on any monastic or conventual order willing to establish itself in the said parish.

Lieutenant Wallace was, indeed, very zealous on behalf of the Roman Church, although he somewhat inconsistently continued without its pale. About this time he began to exercise an influence over Desmond, and it was through his means that our hero became introduced to certain controversial works very popular among Roman Catholics. Together with the lieutenant, Desmond walked one Saturday eighteen miles to visit a certain Father Lemaitre, a Romanist priest who celebrated mass once a month in that district, and into whose ears the young man confided his convictions and his eager desire to be admitted into "the one true fold." The good Father counselled patience and caution, but on matters of faith Desmond brooked no delay. Ere long it was known in Torweston that

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Hugh Desmond had been "conditionally" baptized into the Roman communion, and Mr. Dunn, the pilot, possessed the felicity of knowing that all along he had been a true prophet.

This secession, however it may have been anticipated by the knowing ones, created unwonted excitement in the community. It was discussed by the fishermen lounging on the Cliff, where they assembled daily while waiting for the tide to serve, and among these bearded and bronzed children of the Channel it was generally believed that young Desmond had already commenced to form a collection of "images" for his own private and peculiar adoration. In the village reading-room, after the committee of that new institute had transacted the monthly business, the President, Mr. Calfton, the treasurer, Captain Topp, and half-a-dozen other notables, spent more than an hour in considering what course ought to be taken now that the Scarlet Woman had openly displayed herself in their very midst. Finally, it was resolved that Mr. Calfton should deliver a lecture in the Independent chapel, the subject to be, "Antichrist Identified with the Papacy," and the secretary of the reading-room undertook to send a report to the *Mercury*. Hitherto but few pupils had been withdrawn from Desmond because of his perversion. To be sure, their parents hated Romanism with all the antipathy of ignorance intensified by heredity, but so long as the young schoolmaster kept his doctrines out of the daily teaching, and refrained from actual conflict with any of the denominations of the town and their leaders, he was likely to undergo no molestation or annoyance. The occasion, however, was a most opportune one for the leaders among the Independents to exhibit their ultra-Protestant zeal, and not even John Calvin himself was more zealous than were Mr. Calfton, Captain Topp, and the other celebrities and leaders of this rigid sect of predestinarians.

The announcement of the forthcoming lecture,—it was placarded in large type on every dead wall throughout the district,—however our hero may have regarded it, considerably excited Lieutenant Wallace; so much so, indeed, that he lost no time in calling on Desmond to ascertain what counter-measures, if any, were advisable to be taken. Of the two, the Lieutenant was by far the more eager on behalf of the Roman Church; indeed, with Desmond,—as with the majority of converts,—it seemed that, having entered the fold, he had exchanged all his former intellectual activity and excitement

for the opposite extreme of well-nigh intellectual torpor. In one respect he certainly was the better for the important step he had taken ; instead of sinning against his own body, as he had formerly done, by extreme jejunations and protracted vigils, he had learned to conform to the judicious discipline of the Roman communion, to the manifest improvement of his health ; while his mind, though less stimulated, was probably benefited commensurately and restored to a more even balance. On this particular Sunday evening the Lieutenant was certainly much more polemically disposed than was his companion. They were pacing slowly along the Battery, a bold hill overlooking the harbour, affording a noble view of the Channel and of the various points of land which jutted out on both arms of the crescent-like coast.

"I find," said the Lieutenant, "that the fame of Calfton's lecture has already spread beyond the confines of Torweston. Many of my neighbours have mentioned the matter to me, and yesterday I even found one of the posters pasted up at the back of my little stable, which is clearly a trespass. That, I take it, is not the only instance of this sort of people acting on the maxim they attribute to the Jesuits—of doing evil that good may ensue. I think, however, that the trespasser has been 'hoist with his own petard.' What do you think I have done with the bill?"

"Since posting it on your stable, without your permission having been obtained or even sought after, was unjustifiable, —and indeed an insult, as your opinions are well known in both parishes,—I presume that you tore the poster down," answered Desmond.

"When I found the bill there, my first impulse *was* to tear it down," said the other, "but on second thoughts I resolved to improve it. With some labour, I pieced together a number of capital letters from the head-lines of newspapers, so that the title of the proposed lecture now reads,—at least on my wall,—'Antichrist Identified with the Reformation.' What do you say to the amendment, eh?"

"I think I should scarcely have liked to misrepresent the opinions—belief, if you like—of the lecturer. Mr. Calfton is a bigot,—not less so in politics than in religion,—and insufferably vain and conceited, but his sincerity is unquestioned. However, I sometimes imagine that you and your neighbours in Tormavy enjoy these little skirmishes, and therefore your

alteration of the poster, if noticed, will probably be considered a good joke. At any rate, if refuted in no other manner, the Independents will assuredly exult over an easy victory."

"If noticed," you say," replied the Lieutenant; "let me tell you that yesterday evening I discovered a small crowd of at least thirty persons reading that particular poster."

"Indeed, Mr. Wallace! Caxton himself never achieved such an immediate triumph with his typography. Thirty persons assembled in Tormavy and no justice of the peace nearer than the vicar of Torweston to read, if necessary, the Riot Act!"

"Well, I suppose I must confess that the crowd was not composed of my fellow parishioners. Your friends of Culm Tor,—the grammar school boys,—had an excursion to the seaside yesterday. I saw your friend Toynbee,—indeed, he appeared very interested in the poster on the wall, though some of the youngsters appeared rather puzzled over my emendation of it."

"Indeed," said Desmond, somewhat eagerly, "were any ladies among the excursionists?"

"Oh, yes, quite a number; it struck me that my joke was highly appreciated by Toynbee and his friends. They are all High Church people, of course? Ritualists, eh?"

"Yes, indeed, all very High Church," replied Desmond somewhat absently. After a moment's pause he continued: "But how do you know the party knew it to be a joke? I thought you said your newspaper capitals defied detection."

"No, no, my friend; I did not go quite so far. There was at least one pair of eyes bright enough to make Falsehood itself ashamed. Quite a Boadicea, I assure you. But surely you must know the lady,—Toynbee's niece?"

"Edith—Miss Allyn?" replied the schoolmaster, "was she there? Know her? why yes, of course; but your notion of Boadicea strikes me as being queer. Boadicea with brown eyes and rather below medium height?"

"Well, well, I withdraw my comparison. I did not know you were so sharp on—shall I say the 'points'—of your lady friends. Yes, the poster was the medium of my introduction to Toynbee."

And, as usual, you soon got more or less involved in controversy with your new friends, I suppose?"

"No, indeed," said the lieutenant; "on the contrary, when

I told why the ultra-Protestants of Torweston were so exercised in mind, Mr. Toynbee said he sympathized with you, and hoped you would live the persecution down. Ah, it was easy to see what he thinks of Calvinism."

"I very much regret that any mention was made of me in connection with Calfton and his bigotry," answered Desmond.

"Tut, tut, my young friend," said the other, "of course people will talk of you. Because you have made your peace with the Church you must of necessity be at war with heresy, and for a long time our sweet and courteous fanatics will howl themselves hoarse over your lapse into idolatry, as they call it. By-the-bye, however,—I had well nigh forgotten it,—I may say that I was almost commissioned to convey a message to you from the owner of those brown eyes you spoke of."

"A message?—to me?—from Miss Allyn?" faltered Desmond.

"Well, it was almost a message, as I said. The young lady asked if I knew you; I said you were my most intimate friend. Did I know if Mr. Desmond aspired to the priesthood, as, she thought, many perverts did?—I assure you she said 'perverts,' but were I as young as you are I would essay to make so pretty a mouth use a better term. I said I was not quite sure,—perhaps it, in some measure, might depend on your success as a teacher among a body of Protestant fanatics. 'Mr. Desmond,' she said, 'will always have our best wishes and even prayers for his welfare.' While I deeply deplore that he has withdrawn from the Church of England, which I believe to be the purest branch of the Church Catholic, yet we all,—uncle, aunt, and I,—we all know that in this matter he has followed conscientiously what he considered the plain path of duty. You may tell him this, if you please. We hope that God will bless him always.' By Jove, that is a rare girl! more devout than controversial, I fancy. She ought to be a nun,—what a fine 'superior' she would make!—such women are only spoiled by marriage."

Whatever his feelings were, or what his thoughts, Desmond was silent regarding Edith. His friend the lieutenant was an excellent confidant on matters theological; but, after all is said, I am sure that deep down in our hero's inmost nature there was one memory-hallowed shrine the veil from which no father-confessor could draw aside.

And so the conversation reverted to Mr. Calfton and his



lecture, the result being that both Desmond and Lieutenant Wallace were present when Mr. Calfton fulminated against Rome.

Confident in their cause, the promoters of the meeting desired any Roman Catholics, if any were in attendance, to speak, whereupon Hugh advanced to the platform. Wisely recognizing that his time was limited, he devoted fifteen minutes to the historical claims of the Roman Church, appealing fervently to his hearers not to forget that their forefathers were Catholics centuries before either Calvin or Luther was born. In conclusion, he roundly asserted that the very Bible so revered by Protestants was the gift of the Catholic Church to mankind, and that without the Church's authorization the canonical scriptures would never have been distinguished from the numerous forgeries of heretical impostors. The lieutenant followed with a very caustic speech, directed mainly against the luminaries of the Reformation. This speech awoke some ill feeling, while Desmond's made the greater impression. Mr. Calfton's reply was singularly ineffective, that worthy polemic being evidently better in attack than in defence.

To Desmond, however, this public controversy worked an unhappy result in the almost immediate withdrawal of all his pupils. Evidently his career as a schoolmaster in Torweston was ended. For a time he struggled bravely to live down the prejudices of his neighbours, and it was only when he discovered that this was impossible that he availed himself of Lieutenant Wallace's advice to seek employment among persons of his own religion. Thus it was that our hero obtained admittance to the household of the Earl of Guisborough.

Almost his last action before he left his home was to write a letter to Edith,—a letter he was destined to read again in after years. Farce or tragedy,—how must superior beings, if such there be, regard this life of man?

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## CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE SCENE CHANGES.

HOLMWOOD Hall, the seat of the Earl of Guisborough, was a large, old-fashioned country house with few architectural peculiarities about it to arrest the traveller's attention. It stood on a broad terrace at the head of an avenue of stately trees, which led up from the hamlet inhabited chiefly by labourers on the Earl's estate. The park, however, was very extensive, with here and there groups of oaks, elms, and beeches, and the gardens were superior to any in Rutlandshire. Midway between the Hall and the village, to the right of the avenue, stood a gothic chapel of much beauty, the vestry of which was used as a school for those village children who were members of the Roman Catholic Church. About a stone's throw from the lodge gate, on the other side of the road, was the vicarage, and in the very centre of the village stood the parish church, a venerable edifice dating from the fourteenth century. The village itself was a very small one, there being about twenty, or perhaps thirty houses nestling under the gray old tower, but there were many outlying hamlets throughout the parish and the houses of the tenant farmers, who cultivated thousands of broad acres of the Guisborough estate. Viewed from the higher land beyond the Hall, the scene was very picturesque, with the clustering red-tiled cottages surmounted by the pinnacled tower, the whole picture enclosed in a frame-work of sage and emerald green. The railway was nearly five miles from Holmwood, and tourists often drove over in dog-carts and gigs, attracted no less by the old parish church and its monuments than by the Hall and its noble owner's beautiful private chapel. Here, too, on certain occasions came various dignitaries with queer un-English titles and most un-English faces, veterans in that would-be conquering army whose steadfast, silent purpose it was to recover for the Roman Church the island which had formerly been the brightest jewel of the triple crown.

There was only one inn in the village,—the "Guisborough Arms." It had nothing of the "hotel" about it, but was what it assumed to be,—a rare virtue in our time even in rural England,—a plain, old-fashioned, thoroughly comfortable English inn. Directly over the door swung the Guisborough

arms and crest, and directly in the doorway stood on most occasions the portly, jolly person of the host, Will Richards.

It was the first of May when Hugh Desmond was driven into Holmwood. He had hired a gig at the railway station with the intention of proceeding straight to the Hall. A somewhat serious collision between two freight trains had occasioned a long detention, and it was quite dark when the gig drew up at the inn door. Learning from Richards that the Earl was still in town, Desmond resolved to pass the night at the Guisborough Arms, where he partook of a hearty supper, after which he betook himself to the well-sanded parlour to while away the hours before bed-time. He was somewhat surprised to find quite a large company, principally farmers, assembled. The watchful landlord probably observed the young man's look, and he explained that on May Day the school children always had a procession, and in fine weather there were various games and a sort of general picnic, free to all, in the park.

"Well, landlord, I will thank you for a tankard of your home-brewed and some tobacco," said Hugh, the latter article being evidently suggested by the number of long churchwardens on the tables and in the mouths of the company. Taking a chair which a gentleman somewhat past middle age politely offered him, our hero lit his pipe and began to look about him. Like most reserved and so-called shy persons, Hugh was fond of society. The events of the last month,—the journey to London, his engagement by the Earl,—seemed to him to resemble the transformations of fairy tales. He had gone back to Torweston with his head almost whirling with excitement, and in a few days he had completed all the arrangements for his departure from Devonshire. Lieutenant Wallace, eager to establish a religious community in Tormavy, was going to London to interview "the Archbishop," and the two friends journeyed together on the Great Western to Oxford, where, like pious pilgrims, they visited the colleges founded in the "good old times, ere England's griefs began." Together, while in the metropolis, they wandered through the Abbey, together they saw the desecrated church of the good monk Rahere in Smithfield, read with bitter sarcasm "the martyrs' tablet," and heard mass in the "pro-cathedral." With all these experiences, Desmond felt himself a man of the world, and though still reserved among strangers, he was

much less shy and self-conscious. His second education had fairly begun; books may make the scholar, but communion with his fellows makes the man.

The gentleman who had offered our hero the chair was evidently curious respecting him. After a few remarks on the condition of the roads and the state of the weather, the middle-aged man grew somewhat bolder. "You will pardon me, I hope, sir," he said, "my abruptness; but you do not look like a traveller,—I mean, of course, one of those commercial travellers that we meet so often now-a-days."

"Quite right, sir," said Hugh, "I am, if you like, rather an uncommercial traveller."

"I beg your pardon, sir, and I hope you will not think me too bold."

"On the contrary, sir," said Hugh, "I am sure it is very kind of you to take notice of a stranger. May I ask if you belong to this village?"

"Belong to Holmwood? Yes, sir, for twenty-five years I have been schoolmaster and parish-clerk."

"Indeed! then in one sense I think we are brother-chips," said Desmond: "I also am a sort of schoolmaster."

"Not the new choir-master for whom the Earl has been advertising, eh?" inquired the middle-aged man.

No sooner was Desmond's reply given than the schoolmaster grasped his hand and gave him a hearty welcome. "My name, sir," he said, "is Appleton,—Joshua Appleton: I am glad to make your acquaintance, Mr.—er?—I protest I forgot to ask your name."

"Desmond," returned the young man; "Hugh Desmond, at your service, Mr. Appleton."

Very much to Hugh's surprise, his companion rose from his chair, rapped his knuckles on the table, and authoritatively called out, "Order, gentlemen!" In a moment silence came upon the company, and all eyes were directed toward the schoolmaster and the new-comer. Mr. Appleton hemmed once or twice, precisely as he always did when making any announcement in church, and formally introduced our hero.

"Gentlemen and friends, I ask permission to introduce Mr. Hugh Desmond, the new choir-master at Holmwood Hall. Gentlemen, I propose that we all drink to his very good health and better acquaintance."

Not only did the gentlemen drink Hugh's health, they

crowded around him, each one determined to shake hands, host Richards, who was also a blacksmith, fairly causing Desmond's arm to tingle in his grip. It was an honest, hearty English welcome, and our hero began to feel at home among the sturdy yeomen. He briefly returned thanks for their kind reception and resumed his seat. Just then a little, thin old man entered the room, upon whom Mr. Joshua Appleton laid violent hands, drawing him up to Desmond's chair just as he would have taken out one of his scholars for condign punishment.

"Bless my soul!" said Joshua,—who was a very excitable person,—"Bless my soul, this is fortunate. Mr. Desmond, allow me to present Mr. Flowers,—old John Flowers,—the *Orbilus plagosus* of the rival academy,—you understand me? of the school belonging to the Earl's church. Flowers, this is Mr. Desmond, your new organist; came an hour or so ago. Fie, old friend! what sort of work is this, to leave the welcoming of your own co adjutor to a heretic like me, ha ha, ha!"

The clerk's voice sounded like an east wind in the Channel, and his ha, ha! was as contagious as the small-pox. In marked contrast was the voice of Flowers as he quietly responded,

"Mr. Desmond is sure of a kindly welcome, old friend, both from me and at the Hall. We knew of his coming, although we were not quite sure of the precise time of his arrival. I am glad to see you, Mr. Desmond, very glad to see you indeed. They tell me there was an accident on the railway near Stamford; I hope you suffered no inconvenience."

"Nothing more than a detention of some hours, Mr. Flowers," replied Desmond, as he made way for the old gentleman's chair. "Arriving here so late I judged it best to stay until morning."

"Quite right, quite right," said Flowers. "I do not doubt that friend Joshua here has done the honours excellently well."

"I am very much obliged to Mr. Appleton for making me feel quite at home already," said Hugh. "I am sure I do not seem to be a stranger, having made the acquaintance of such a number so soon after my arrival."

"Why, you see," said Joshua, "this is May Day, and we always have junketting and holiday on the first of May. However, a few of us always spend an hour or two in this parlour

every night ; our forefathers did it before us, and so do we. We are a somewhat mixed lot, Mr. Desmond, but we are sturdy Englishmen of the old stock. Not so bad as we might be after all, Flowers, no Dissenters and Anabaptists, eh ? ”

“ There are degrees of error, of course, Appleton,” returned the old man, “ and you have always found me willing to allow that the separatists of the Establishment are not so far gone in heresy as the other bodies of their fellow-Protestants. *Sunt enim multi etiam inobedientes ; vaniloqui, es seductores, . . . quos oportet redargui.* ”

“ Yes, friend, it was even so in the days of the great Apostle. Even then, while those who had seen the Master in the flesh were yet alive, there were divisions and strivings for pre-eminence. I hardly know which is the worse picture, our own divisions or those of the early Christians.”

“ The great lapse of the sixteenth century was by far the most awful in history,” said Flowers. “ Judged by its consequences, its authors and abettors were among the greatest criminals, and worthy the severest condemnation.”

“ Tut, tut ! my friend, you must have forgotten much of what you learned at Oxford, when the Church into which you were born was good enough for you. You know very well how horrible were many of the ancient heresies, and the excesses of a few crazy High-Dutch Anabaptists cannot vitiate a movement which, in England at least, led to the purification of our true national church and its freedom from the yoke of an ecclesiastical tyranny which had long lorded it over Christ’s heritage,—a tyranny founded on force, falsehood and fraud.”

“ You learned this doubtless while you were at Oxford, friend Appleton,” said Mr. Flowers ; “ in my time our studies were directed rather toward the discovery of what was right and true than toward finding a thin veneer of speciousness to cover the cracks and flaws in the Tudor church. In my ‘ History of the Tractarian Movement ’ ”—

“ Cracks and flaws ! ” interrupted Joshua, so vehemently that the beer glasses fairly rang ; “ cracks and flaws ! What have we to veneer or hide in the title deeds of the Church of England ? where are our mutilations of the Fathers, our false decretals, our fraudulent miracles and legends, our falsifications of history, our blasphemous worship of saints and angels ? Pooh, Mr. Flowers ! you talk like a convert, your zeal outruns



your discretion. Now, here is Mr. Desmond, a born Romanist no doubt, you do not find him so set on controversy. All you prose/ytes are so zealous, you will not hear reason."

Certainly, if the parish-clerk were an embodiment of reason, then reason must be very dogmatic and overbearing. Joshua Appleton had been compelled to leave the university without a degree, his father's sudden death having left the family totally unprovided for. Without a murmur the young fellow submitted: he obtained a situation as an assistant in a well-known school in the City,—the Appletons had been Londoners for many generations,—and for fifteen years he had supported mother, sister, his brother Alfred and himself in comfort and respectability on one hundred pounds a year. At the end of the fifteen years Alfred procured an appointment in the Indian civil service and the sister had become the wife of a curate in Clerkenwell, Joshua's friend at the university, a second cousin of the lady who, about the same time, on the demise of the old Earl, became the Countess of Guisborough. Shortly before her marriage the last-named lady had become a Roman Catholic. Very much to his surprise, the Rev. George Champenowne was, within a year of his union with Mary Appleton, offered the living of Holmwood. He was not a poor man, having fair private means, but he eagerly availed himself of the promotion. The living was a good one, but under the old vicar everything had gone to decay. Above all, the school was very much neglected, so much so that many of the farmers and villagers sent their children to the school established by the Earl, and which, while not exactly a proselyting agency, was undeniably intended for Roman Catholics. After a little persuasion, Joshua Appleton undertook the charge of the village school, and he and his mother moved to Holmwood, Joshua being then thirty-five years old. For twenty-five years he continued to occupy the dual office of schoolmaster and parish-clerk. On Sundays and holy-days he read the lessons in church, and his influence in the parish was almost as high as that of his brother-in-law, the vicar. He and his mother—now nearly eighty—dwelt in a comfortable house near the school, having the playground on one side and the churchyard on the other.

Forty years ago John Flowers had been the rector of a very rich parish in the midlands. He had sacrificed this and fifteen hundred pounds a year in order to join the Roman Church.

For ten years he had struggled with poverty in London, earning a precarious subsistence by writing for the Roman Catholic papers and magazines. Unfortunately his scholarship was not of the marketable variety. He was a ponderous writer, his sentences being very long and curiously involved. While in London he had published a "History of the Tractarian Movement," which he had contrived to make about as interesting as Nehemiah's list of returned exiles. About fifty copies were sold or given out for review, the world rolled on and the book and its author were alike forgotten. One day a careless, good-natured Irishman, who wrote leaders to order for a daily paper, was introduced to Flowers by a mutual friend. The journalist compelled the ex-parson to dine with him at the "Cock," and before he knew what he was about the poor scholar was assisting his new friend to concoct whiskey punch at the latter's lodgings in Catherine street. They had spent a couple of hours very agreeably, and the newspaper man was just in the middle of a glowing tribute to Father Prout, when he found that his guest was pretty far gone in intoxication. The generous liquor was too potent for the brain of the half-starved scholar, which had succumbed just as the Irishman's began to bubble over with wit and patriotic devotion. In reply to a question, Flowers gave his host the name of the street in which he lived,—a secret he would have jealously held if sober,—and in a short time after they were both on their way to Westminster in a cab. As he anticipated, the street in which the journalist was finally landed was a wretched purlieu, but he was profoundly shocked when he found that the home of the ex-clergyman and his wife and two daughters was nothing more than a miserable garret. He departed as soon as the victim of his hospitality was safely housed, but for weeks thereafter the thought of the misery he had seen fairly haunted him. He exerted his influence in certain quarters so successfully that ere long John Flowers was withdrawn from London and comfortably installed as the first Roman Catholic schoolmaster seen in Rutlandshire since the Reformation.

Often meeting at the inn, as on a neutral ground, the pedagogues soon came to know each other intimately. Ever and anon the combative Joshua would spur his friend on to a theological disputation, in which the one combatant seemed to wield an English quarterstaff, the other a keen and subtle

rapier. In general, however, Mr. Flowers sought to avoid these debates, and on the present occasion he was especially desirous that the new-comer into the parish should be spared the din and clangor of a controversy with which he must be familiar. Joshua's allusion to the young man as "a born Romanist," however, afforded Flowers an opportunity which few mortals could disregard, and in a tone of absolute triumph he said :

"There, friend, you are mistaken, and I hope the circumstance will tend to make you more diffident with regard to the infallibility of your own judgment. Mr. Desmond was formerly a member of the Established Church."

"Yes, I remember ; of course, of course," replied Joshua. "I quite forgot ; but Mr. Desmond will forgive me, I am sure. Yes, sir, I know all about it ; but our young friend is none the less welcome."

"Mr. Appleton," said Flowers, "I know you for an incorrigible gossip, but in this case I am at a loss to conjecture whence you procure your information."

"Tut, tut, man !" returned Joshua, "you know that Lady Blanche regularly corresponds with Mrs. Champernowne. You make much of your converts, and women's tongues are very much like aspen leaves. It was only yesterday that my sister was deploring the advances made by Romanism, and the vicar and I soon discovered that the Lady Blanche had told her that the new organist was a pervert,—or, as you say, a convert. However, I beg pardon, Mr. Desmond ! All this is most improper ; I regret that we should have spoken of it."

To do him justice, Mr. Appleton was ashamed of his indiscretion, and so worthily did he exert himself by way of atonement that the evening passed most pleasantly without polemics, and our hero retired to rest very well satisfied with his new friends and with himself.

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## CHAPTER IX.

WHICH THE READER MAY FIND SOPORIFIC.

THE young choir-master had grown thoroughly familiar with his duties and acquainted with his scholars before the family came down to Holmwood. His own apartment was near the rooms of Mr. Flowers and his family, with a larger room between which served them both as a dining-room and private parlour. They got along very comfortably together, although at times Mr. Flowers seemed a trifle tedious. Nevertheless, he was a profound scholar, and under his guidance Hugh profited much with such an El Dorado as the Earl's magnificent library thrown open to him. Joshua Appleton, —in his own forceful manner,—had insisted on introducing Hugh to the Champernownes, laughing heartily when he perceived that the young man almost recoiled with sanctified horror from paying a visit to an heretical minister. The ice once broken, however, Hugh soon learned to respect the good vicar and his wife, the more readily perhaps that he found they did not share the combative instincts of the lady's brother.

As the time drew near for the Earl's return, our hero found himself growing somewhat nervous. Would they be satisfied with his methods? Would the chaplain prove exacting with regard to the church music? Above all, was the Earl of Guisborough of a domineering nature? Hugh was very much impressed by the almost reverential manner in which the Earl was spoken of by those around him. Born on the sea-coast, where feudal influences are always at their weakest, Desmond was almost a stranger to those sentiments of respect for the nobility and gentry which in agricultural districts approximate to obsequious servility. One evening, at the village inn, he went so far as to ask Joshua Appleton why it was that all the farmers he met were ultra-Conservatives in politics. "I do not think," he added, "that I have heard any one of them express sympathy with the Ministry since I have been at Holmwood. Are all farmers inclined to side with the party not in office?"

"Tut, tut, young man!" said the schoolmaster; "you are, I see, of an inquiring turn of mind. Take care, or it will

land you in Radicalism. As to the farmers, they are pretty much alike all over England, and, I suppose, the world:—they are bullet-headed, sir; stolid as their own oxen; unable to discern their own needs or to recognize what tends to their own advantage. Our farmers, young man, are of the politics of their landlord. It was always so,—mayhap it will always be so; Parliament has given them the ballot, but it cannot give them brains. Sir, I am the only Liberal in the parish, I think; even my own brother-in-law is a blind adherent of Toryism."

When, at last, the family did arrive, Hugh found no change occurred so far as his daily routine was concerned. Three times a week Mr. Flowers left his school at noon, the afternoons being devoted to the singing practice. A few days after the home-coming, the Earl sent for Desmond and kindly interrogated him, apparently rather with a desire to ascertain if he were comfortable than for any other reason. In the afternoon the choir was in the midst of a new chant when the Earl, his daughter, and the chaplain entered the vestry. The party halted just inside the swinging doors, and the chant continued unbroken until the *Amen*. Then the young master arose and made a profound bow as the Earl and his companions came forward. The priest was an Englishman, Father Henry Nevins, and at the introduction he greeted the master warmly, while at the same time his scrutiny was keen. The Lady Blanche gave Hugh a distant bow, and a burning blush came to the young man's cheek with the memory of the moment when last her eyes met his. The chaplain, however, had come to superintend the choir's drill, and in a few minutes, after each child had been duly noticed, the practice was resumed. Lady Blanche had a good voice, but Desmond was much more impressed by her distinct and clear articulation of the Latin syllables, and by her most un-Roman, but altogether English, pronunciation of the vowel *e*.

Father Nevins was pleased to congratulate Hugh on his method of teaching and the evident improvement of the choir. The Earl was no less pleased,—though he probably took his opinion from the chaplain, or perhaps he was gratified to find his daughter somewhat less critical than had been her wont.

In the evening, while Desmond and the schoolmaster were having a quiet game of chess, Father Nevins visited their apartment. He, too, was a convert, having once held a Church

of England curacy in the diocese of Winchester. He had been one of the first to follow in the wake of Newman. Fortunately for himself, he had not entered into the state of matrimony, and no obstacle existing thereto he became in due time a priest of the Roman Church. The fervour of his zeal had, however, long since abated, and it may be that he sought our hero's company,—for he became a regular visitor to the room of the teachers,—mainly by way of stimulating his languishing enthusiasm. Little by little, our hero told him of his mental scruples and struggles, and the chaplain did not fail to notice how powerful a factor in effecting his conversion Hugh's emotional, highly imaginative nature had been.

"Mr. Desmond," said the priest one evening,—Flowers having gone to the village,—“Mr. Desmond, I will be frank with you. You think,—nay, you are now certain,—that you have found rest. Believe me, it is not so. For the time, you have found what I may term intellectual quietude, but absolute rest does not exist this side the grave. It is our lot to live in a transition age, when the minds of men are torn and convulsed as we know the world itself was in the distant past. Mind you, I do not say that in past generations doubts and uncertainties have not troubled the souls of men; but the trouble was then confined to the few, now it is well-nigh common to all men. In our time the very newspapers trench upon the rights of the pulpit, and in to-morrow's *Times* or *Daily News*,—or even in some provincial paper,—there may lurk a poison fatal to one's spiritual life. We cannot always keep ourselves at a fever heat of controversial fervour, or feel ourselves engaged in one continuous crusade. I often think that for those who were not born into the Church the more frequent recourse to penance and the communion is a necessity. Only thus can we protect ourselves against the evil habit fostered by Protestantism,—the habit of cavilling, testing, arguing and doubting.”

“It may be so, Father,” said Hugh, “but there is surely some protection in the knowledge that doubt is sin.”

“True,” replied the priest, “but doubts recur and persist, and the only sure means of resisting is that of an early penance.”

“So far as my own individual reason is concerned,” replied Desmond, “I have fully convinced myself that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ, the unerring witness and



custodian of His revelation to mankind. With God's blessing, and by the intercession of Saint John the Apostle, I hope never to be enticed or drawn back into the society of heretics and schismatics."

"Amen!" replied Mr. Nevins, "but in our time heresy and schism are not the Devil's only snares. However, let us not be too serious out of place; just now I have a business commission to fulfil. Of course you know the Kendalls, at least Alice and Mary, the sweetest voices in your choir. The father is the wealthiest of the Earl's tenant-farmers. He is not a Catholic, but his wife is, and he allows her to educate the children in the old faith. There are two boys, however, in a grammar school at Stamford."

"Surely," interposed Hugh, "such a system must ultimately lead to confusion; the boys will probably grow up as Protestants, and disunion must inevitably follow."

"Not necessarily so, Mr. Desmond. I have generally noticed that domestic ties are the most lasting, and in our age it is by no means the rule that religious differences raise up to a man enemies from out his own household. I once knew a man, a convert, who endeavoured to bring his wife into the bosom of the Church. Unfortunately, he was over-zealous; like the woman in the play, he urged his point day and night. I myself warned him to be more judicious, to 'listen slowly.' He continued, however, to argue, and, I fear, even to threaten, until his wife passed into a state of sullen resistance, when he gave the whole thing up in sheer despair."

"But she was ultimately brought to a knowledge of the truth, I hope, sir?" said Desmond.

"Indeed, I fear not," replied Mr. Nevins; "the husband consequently lapsed into infidelity,—became a Positivist or a Secularist, or something of that kind. Zeal is all very well while it lasts, but it is a kind of fire that soon exhausts itself."

Father Nevins sighed in such a manner that a more keen observer than Desmond might have imagined the priest recognized and regretted his own lukewarmness.

"About these Kendalls, however," he resumed; "Mrs. Kendall is anxious that Alice and Mary should take music lessons, and I am deputed to ask if you would care to be their instructor. As I told you, the family is wealthy, and the terms are very good. If you like the proposition, it would be

a good thing for you, and I do not know even that you might not, indirectly, of course, exert a missionary influence."

"But the Earl," said Hugh; "I am his paid employee, and I have no right thus to dispose of even my spare time."

"Be quite at ease in that respect," answered the chaplain; "I have already consulted his lordship, and he is willing that you should take as many pupils as you can obtain without interfering with or encroaching on your more immediate duties."

And so it was settled. Hugh's income would be increased to a hundred pounds by the arrangement, while the additional labour amounted to but very little. Moreover, it opened up to him a wider society than that of the Hall, and his evenings gradually became a little more pleasant as his social circle expanded, and Mrs. Flowers and her daughter, under Desmond's auspices, soon became on intimate terms with many of their neighbours with whom they had previously,—thanks to the recluse nature of the old schoolmaster,—made little or no acquaintance. It was a serene and happy existence, almost without a cloud, a time to be looked back upon with pleasure and regret. Young as he was, however, Desmond bore within the chamber of memory one disturbing remembrance. "We hope that God will bless him always,"—these words he had not forgotten and could not forget, and whenever he thought of Edith Allyn it was with a perturbation of spirit distressingly afflictive to one who aspired to celibacy and the priesthood. He was trying to expel nature with a fork; and all human experience goes to prove that he who would vanquish Love should begin by counteracting and outraging Nature in some such manner as that adopted by Origen of Alexandria. Yet while professing to desire the cure, men strangely seem to dislike the remedy.

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## CHAPTER XI.

WHEREIN THE MOON IS CLEARLY AT FAULT.

HUGH Desmond had lived at Holmwood about a year, a quiet and apparently an uneventful life. During that time but little of moment had occurred in the district. Joshua Appleton's mother had died full of years, falling asleep surrounded by those whom she had loved—the painless euthanasia so seldom the lot of the children of this high-pressure age. Joshua himself was as bluff and hearty as ever, and to his other dignities he had added the title of President of the Holmwood Literary Association, which was the somewhat high-flown designation of the reading-room, which he had been mainly instrumental in founding. The institute, though modest, was decidedly useful, and the subscriptions of the members kept it fairly well supplied with the London and local papers and a goodly number of the magazines. Perhaps, if the truth were confessed, landlord Richards, of the Guisborough Arms, did not look upon the enterprise with much favour, it being undeniable that the villagers could not be, like Sir Boyle Roche's bird, in two places at once. However, the experiment was a success, and mine host had no alternative but acquiescence.

Desmond had now some half-dozen extra pupils to attend to, and this, together with his reading, prevented time from hanging heavy on his hands. With the Kendalls he had become a prime favourite, so much so that the village gossips found the theme a fruitful one for "putting two and two together." Alice Kendall was now in her eighteenth year, and she was, moreover, a particularly good-looking, plump and rosy young lady, with clear, honest grey eyes, and dark-brown hair. She was passionately fond of music, and her rich voice rendered her the chief ornament of the chapel choir. Between her and the music-master a close friendship had grown up, and as Alice, although she had been educated at home, was a great reader, Hugh became gradually a sort of director of and adviser in her studies. Thus it happened that he spent much of his time at the Kendall homestead, and he himself was quite aware that he benefited very much from this association with the hearty, kindly, yet refined family, of the most respected yeoman of the district.

The Hall was just now rather too full of visitors for a man of Desmond's tastes. In the park, in the chapel, the school, and the library he encountered gentlemen and ladies, ecclesiastical dignitaries, luminaries of literature, science and art, cadets of noble families, officers of both branches of "the service," statesmen and politicians. His intercourse with these was almost wholly limited to bowing to them whenever and wherever he chanced to encounter them. Whatever he may have thought, it was evident enough that they belonged to another world than that wherein music-teachers move and have their being, and whenever it was possible Desmond betook himself either to the Kendalls', the village reading-room or his own apartment.

One afternoon he and Alice met midway between the village and her father's farm, which was called Beech Farm. Alice had been to the vicarage, and her cheeks were glowing with health and exercise. She made a pretty picture as she came up the hill attended by "Wolf," a retriever, who, recognizing the master as a friend, came bounding forward to greet him. The colour in the girl's face heightened somewhat as she extended her hand.

"I am delighted to meet you, Miss Kendall," said Hugh. "I was in doubt whether to go to the village or to Beech Farm, but now may I not ask to accompany you home?"

"Thank you," answered Alice, "I hope you will do so, and as this is practice night, you will stay to tea, and then we will all go back with you to the Hall,—I mean Mary and I and 'Wolf.'"

"I suppose Mr. Kendall has gone to the hunt to-day?" inquired Hugh.

"Yes," she said, "I think almost all the farmers are there. They grumble very much when their fields are gone over, but they seem to enjoy the sport all the same just as much as the gentlemen do. Don't you think that hunting is cruel, Mr. Desmond? Fancy all this bustle and eagerness over a poor little fox."

"Nay, Miss Alice; it seems to me that we hear a lot of puling, mawkish sentiment now-a-day, that our good old forefathers would have despised. With respect to the fox, if we could consult him, he would probably prefer the chances of being hunted to wholesale extermination, which would, were hunting abolished, be the alternative. Do you know,—I hope

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you will not class me among the cruel ones,—I think that I should really enjoy hunting as much as these gentry of ours do? But in England one must, I think, belong to the privileged classes to enjoy living at all."

"I hardly know," replied Alice; "father and the other tenants seem to like following the hounds, though of course their station prevents them from hunting in pink like the members of the Hunt."

"I think they are not to be blamed for doing so," said Desmond, "since surely those who create are as much entitled to this pleasure as are those who seem only born to consume."

There was a touch of discontent in the young man's voice, which his companion did not fail to notice. Holmwood, however, was outside the track of new opinions, and Alice did not dare even to follow the line of speculation which Desmond's words suggested.

"Lady Blanche," she said, "is most regular in her attendance at the choir practice, is she not? She is very beautiful, don't you think, Mr. Desmond? Ma says her beauty is of the Meadows type."

"Rather of the Theodora type, I should imagine," answered Desmond, it must be confessed with but a very imperfect idea of Procopius's portrait of the Circensian nymph. "She has wonderful eyes, but their expression seems to me very haughty."

"You don't like black eyes, then, Mr. Desmond?" asked his companion, "yet your own are just as dark as those of Lady Blanche."

They were now on the brow of the hill, and the road wound to the left, bounded for nearly a mile by Holmwood Park. On their right hand was the road to Beech Farm, a pretty, quiet lane, with high, grass-covered hedges on both sides, from which grew hazels, young elms, ashes and beeches. Down this lane Alice and Desmond turned just as the former was speaking. Hugh, somewhat amused at Alice's remark, bent his head toward her laughingly, and said:

"Surely, you do not insinuate that my expression is haughty, do you, Miss Kendall?"

Alice blushed and uttered a slight exclamation, and Desmond, raising his head, saw a few yards down the lane a party of returning hunters, the foremost two being the Hon. Captain Meadows and his sister, the Lady Blanche. The captain

looked amused as his glance fell on the couple whose converse had been apparently so interesting as to render the tread of the cavalcade inaudible. When, however, his eyes met Hugh's the smile faded from his countenance, his look being met by another imperious enough to rank its owner among the most arrogant of the Meadows race whose portraits hung in the long gallery at the Hall. As they rode slowly by, the Lady Blanche bent her head slightly to Alice Kendall, Desmond's bow being apparently unnoticed.

"By Jove!" said the captain to his sister, as they turned the corner, "your interesting convert seems still bent on conversion. I am much mistaken if that pretty little rustic is not already nearly of his opinion. Did you see him bending over her while he expounded his doctrine? Faith, I think she reads her creed in his eyes."

"Pshaw, Robert!" said Blanche; "that is Alice Kendall, our little soprano. Mr. Desmond is her teacher, and she is a mere child."

"A child, eh?" said the Captain; "a deuced fine child too. Take my word for it, your music-man carries an eye dangerous to the peace of mind of such children. I do not like that fellow; he looks devilishly priggish and conceited. By George! he looks you straight in the eye, though; one of those fellows who fancy themselves above their station. I don't like him."

"The music-man, as you term him," answered Blanche, "is said to be quite a scholar. He is highly spoken of by Father Nevins, and pa considers him quite a treasure. He will survive your dislike, Robert."

"Faith," said the other, "he seems to know how to make the best of it. Let us hope that Tom Kendall will not cut down his aspirations. But in this confounded era of Radicalism even our good, honest, old-fashioned yeomen seem to recognize superiority in a black coat."

"It may be, Robert, because they have learned from experience how much inferiority is generally covered by a red one," answered his sister, banteringly, and the cavalcade rode on toward the Park.

The choir practice this evening was considerably protracted. In the first place, a party of visitors from the Hall came in the train of Father Nevins and the indefatigable Lady Blanche, and among them were two ardent lovers of church music, for whose delectation much extra work was imposed on

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the choir. Indeed, the regular practice was not entered upon until these visitors, profuse in compliments, had departed. Scarcely had they gone, when a messenger summoned the priest to attend a dying woman in a distant part of the parish, and Father Nevins had to content himself with a few brief intimations to Desmond respecting the changes to be made in the Sunday services. Hugh expected that Lady Blanche, too, would not care to stay long beyond the usual hour, there being no other person present from the Hall, except, of course, he himself. Very much to his surprise, however, the young lady did stay, and the fact of her presence became very apparent. The practice-room of the vestry was rather a small one, and when all were present various ingenious contrivances were used to utilize the limited space to the best possible advantage. The American organ stood in front of the window, and a double row of chairs formed concentric semicircles at the back of the organist. Alice Kendall's usual position was at what we may term the right horn of the inner crescent, directly in view of her friend the teacher. Now, however, this chair was occupied by Lady Blanche Meadows, while Alice had taken a seat in the rear rank. All went well until the vesper hymn was raised :

"Lucis Creator optime,  
 Lucem dierum proferens,  
 Primordiis lucis novae,  
 Mundi parans originem."

Then it was that Alice found the eyes which Desmond had objected to as being haughty, turned towards her, while their owner said :

"Alice, why can you not soften those *i's* of yours? Pardon me, Mr. Desmond"—as the music abruptly ceased at the interruption—"pardon me, but surely you must have noticed Miss Kendall's *i's*?"

"Miss Kendall's eyes!" asked Hugh, a mischievous twinkle gleaming in his own. "Why, yes, my lady, I think I did this evening. I think they are very nice eyes."

Could a glance have annihilated, Hugh Desmond would at that moment have been dissolved into nothingness. While speaking, however, he himself threw a searching, arch look at the young lady. For just an instant she seemed struggling to maintain her hauteur, but the eagle glance softened into

something almost dove-like while the master was speaking. Doubtless it is somewhat difficult for even the proudest maiden to preserve a rigid austerity of demeanour under all circumstances, and not even the consciousness of rank and station are always proof against that which we, in our ignorance, term personal magnetism. At any rate, Blanche Meadows even smiled as she said :

"I mean Miss Kendall's vowel sounds, if you please. *Mundi*, with our English *i*, long and hard ; it can be distinctly heard as a dissonance above all the singing."

Poor Alice looked guilty of a very grave fault indeed, but Desmond came gallantly to the rescue.

"Yet I acknowledge, Lady Blanche," he said, "that this system of Italianizing sometimes grates on an English ear. For instance, think of *Cantet nunc Io* turned into *Cantet nunc Eeo*—the shout of manly joy and triumph converted into a feeble wail of nerveless imbecility. However, Miss Kendall must endeavour to bear in mind the distinction. After all, the Church's language must be of universal application ; and this compels us even to sacrifice our prejudices in little things, which are sometimes, I think, much more difficult to sacrifice than are others of greater importance. If you please, we will begin the *Lucis Creator* again ; and, if possible, let us sing it to the end without interruption."

Even old Sir Harry Meadows, whose armour and sword were harging in the great hall at Holmwood, dented by the blows so ungrudgingly bestowed at Bosworth Field, must have, had he been present, confessed that the music-master had his choir well in hand. The hymn was rendered satisfactorily, and the practice proceeded to the close without any interruption worth noticing. As one by one, or in little groups, the choristers departed, Desmond observed a slight hesitation on the part of Lady Blanche. In a moment he remembered that Father Nevins was not there to accompany the lady to the Hall : it was now eight o'clock, and the walk from the lodge up the avenue would be very lonesome and perhaps dreary. Ordinarily he would have gone with Alice at least as far as Beech Farm lane, but now it devolved upon him to alter this usual programme. Fortunately, he was not slow to act when necessity was imposed upon him.

"Lady Blanche," he said, with a low bow of respect, "we are much later than usual this evening, and I fear you are

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alone. Miss Kendall goes as far as the lodge, and may I proffer my attendance afterward to the Hall? It is not very dark, but your ladyship cannot go home through the avenue unattended. Pray consider me at your service, if you please."

Something like a film-cloud of disappointment passed over Alice's face. Lady Blanche was evidently relieved by the organist's proposition.

"Thank you, Mr. Desmond," she said; "if you will be so good, I will at least accompany you as far as the lodge, and there perhaps we may find Joslyn the keeper or his little daughter."

Reader, hast thou ever escorted two ladies along a country road on a moonlight evening in autumn? If yes, let me ask of thee if one of these chanced to be of a higher sphere than thine own, while the other was but "a simple maiden in her flower," wert thou not in a parlous situation? How couldst thou at once entertain Lady Clara Vere de Vere and eke the miller's daughter? Which of this trio most enjoyed that walk to the lodge at Holmwood Park I cannot tell thee. Alice Kendall was shy, speaking only when spoken to, and I do not question that she was really rejoiced when the thatched roof of Joslyn's beautiful cottage became visible. Did she imagine that, arrived at this point, Hugh Desmond's office of chaperon to the titled lady would cease? Alas, little Alice! these titled ladies have peculiar ways.

"Good-night, Alice," said Lady Blanche; "I know with 'Wolf,' the trusty, you have nothing to dread. Hi! 'Wolf,' attend your mistress! Good-night, Alice!"

"Wolf" looked sorely puzzled at his young mistress as she moved away. Was it by way of rebuke or entreaty that the dog came and licked Desmond's hand?

Joslyn, his wife and daughter stood at the lodge gate and saluted their young lady. Blanche passed on without intimating a wish that any of the keeper's family should attend, and Desmond resigned himself to the prospect of a somewhat cold and depressing walk to the Hall. For a few minutes the two pursued their way in silence,—the truth being that the organist feared to obtrude himself on his ward's notice. Knowing well the distance that separated them, he had wrapped himself in the scholar's pride, which neither envies nor admires even although it does not "smile at the claims of long descent."

Suddenly,—so very suddenly that he was fairly surprised,—the lady turned to him and said :

"Do you like Alice Kendall so very much ? They say you are in love with her."

"I,—Alice ? Lady Blanche, you surprise me. In love with Alice ? Is it possible that your ladyship can be amused or interested by the idle gossip which may have linked our names together ? 'This is the first time the matter was ever seriously brought to my mind ; but I should think the subject scarcely worth your ladyship's attention."

"Is that an answer, Mr. Desmond ?" The organist stepped forward in line with the Earl's proud daughter. As his eyes met hers, he fairly trembled, man though he was, for an idea that seemed born of madness rushed through his brain. Was it a mere fancy ? or could it be that the lady also trembled violently ? Be calm, Hugh Desmond, son of the sailor ! let no wild thought cause thee to lose thy self-possession ! It may have been,—it must have been, the moon. Aye, the moon ; sailing from cloud-point to cloud-point in yonder firmament that is not farther removed from thee than is this noble damsel whose look and manner thou might'st, had not reason intervened, so strangely have misconstrued. Be calm, Sir Organist, until this walk, unsought by thee, is ended !

"An answer, Lady Blanche ? I beg your pardon. Yes ; I like Miss Kendall, but not with the liking that is love."

"Not with the liking that is love ?" she asked. "I am glad to hear you say so, for I do not think you suited to one another. Mr. Desmond,"—and Blanche Meadows laid her hand on the young man's arm,—"*they say marriages are made in heaven, by which I suppose they mean that in such things there is a fate. Who can say ? One thing more : I will not ask you either to excuse my curiosity or to forget this discourse ; but do you absolutely unbosom yourself in the confessional ?*"

"Lady Blanche, I only confess my sins there, in obedience to the canon and the Church. Why do you ask ?"

"They tell me that you are as full of zeal as Loyola. Is that so ?"

"My lady, I have made the Church my mother, my spouse, my all. Upon this rock I am firmly founded, and woe betide me should I prove unfaithful or unpersevering to the end."

"I know, I know," she answered ; "you are now animated

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by the glowing ardour of a new disciple. I, too, have been no less ardent, but time and something else have had their influence too. Beware, however, lest you develop into a mere devotee, a fanatic. At present you are a mere scholar, a sort of recluse. At your present stage one may make an irretrievable mistake,—say, for instance, by abandoning the world. Only those should be priests who are sure that their conquest over nature is absolute, complete. Otherwise they assuredly incur the peril of lying before the Deity, or of breaking their solemn vows in the inevitable conflict when nature prompts to one thing and religion another. Mr. Desmond, you will not become a priest?"

"I do not think so, my lady. I once thought I had a vocation; but something occurred to suggest that it might be otherwise."

"Indeed! May I ask—but no; at least not now. May we not talk of this some other time?"

"Your ladyship is very good to be so interested in me. But circumstances, or destiny, or—"

"Providence, you would say, has placed us so far apart that all such communication is impossible. Not so, Mr. Desmond. I think Fate is rarely heard, except from coward lips, and I detest the word 'impossible.' But here we part. Good night!"

O Earl of Guisborough, high and mighty owner of all these wide domains! why does not thy rubicund and much bewigged ancestor in thy house in Belgravia send thee some intimation of thy daughter's lapse from aristocratic altitudes and pride of place? There, out yonder, where that stately avenue begins, —there, seen only by the wicked, mischief-encouraging moon, she even offers her hand to the music man; and he, while bending low in salutation, is only, perhaps, deterred by one tender remembrance from carrying those taper fingers to his lips. Yes, verily, my lord, if ever maiden's heart were in perilous danger, that maiden is thy daughter. Such things have happened in romance, and, now and then, in history,—for who can account for, or explain, a woman and her whims?

And he, the music-master, what of him to-night? I cannot say more than that he felt as one dreaming. Could it be that he was mistaken? had he foolishly leaped to a wrong conclusion? Most devoutly did he hope so, for, in his present state of mind, he could no more associate Blanche Meadows with

his own heart in love than he could have placed himself in the same situation with respect to the *Virgo virginum*, the Queen of Heaven, Mary the Mother of God. And, even in his prayers that night, his errant memory flew back to his last evening at Culm Tor.

## CHAPTER XII.

### TWO LETTERS AND AN INFIDEL.

THE next morning, on entering the common parlour, Desmond found Mr. Flowers there before him. The old gentleman was seated before a huge volume of commentaries, and his only response to Hugh's salutation was rather enigmatical.

"*Mulierem fortem quis inveniet?* a strong woman who shall find? In what sense do you understand *fortem*, eh? surely not *strong*, for who desires strength in a woman?"

"Whether used with a mental or physical application, it conveys the notion of power," replied Hugh. "In the Douay version it is rendered *valiant*, but in the authorized Protestant version the appropriate word *virtuous* transforms the passage."

"Yes, yes," said the schoolmaster, "you are certainly right. These proverbs do not sound well in Latin,—if I may say so, they appear to have been servilely rendered. Yet, doubtless, the Holy Spirit directed the work. But take this other passage: '*Sindonem fecit, et vendidit, et cingulum tradidit Chananæo.*' Why did she, or why does she, give a girdle to the Canaanite? You see, the translator sins against the Horatian maxim."

"Certainly," replied Hugh, "the heretical version imparts a clearer idea. How does it read? let me see?—ah!—'She maketh fine linen, and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.' But, however beautiful this translation may be, let us not forget the terrible evils it has wrought."

"True, my young friend," said Flowers, with something very like a sigh of regret; "but I cannot help admiring the grand old masterpiece of English scholarship. It is as English as Shakespeare; it has helped to fashion our national character. I almost wish it were our own."

"I can quite understand your feeling, my dear sir," replied

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Hugh, "but nothing is clearer to me than that the Church has been compelled absolutely to discourage the general reading of the Holy Scriptures. Do we not see that, in wrong hands, certain drugs and alkaloids,—sanatory when administered by the physician,—become deadly poisons?"

"It is a pity that this should be, as I fear it is, the case with regard to the first and greatest witness to the Catholic faith,—the revealed Word of God," said the old gentleman; "but, dear me! I beg your pardon for forgetting it, here are two letters for you."

"Letters?" said Desmond; "thank you! Ah, Devonshire this; and what is this postmark, Dublin? Why, who in Ireland knows me, I wonder?"

"I have always," said Mr. Flowers with a smile, "found the best way to determine who wrote a letter is to open and read it. Suppose you try that plan?" and he once again bent over the big commentary.

Inasmuch as Devonshire was nearer to his heart than Dublin, Hugh began with the letter from his native county. It may have no special bearing on the salient facts of this narrative, perhaps,—but, then, perhaps it may have; so, on the whole, we deem it best to reproduce the letter:—

"TORMAVY (near Torweston-on-Sea).

"May 22, 1872.

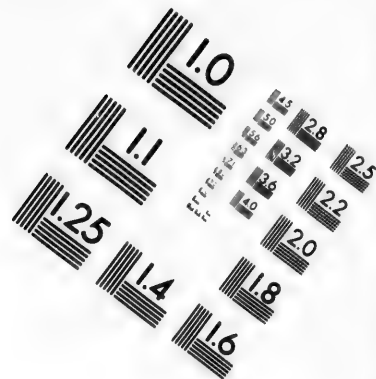
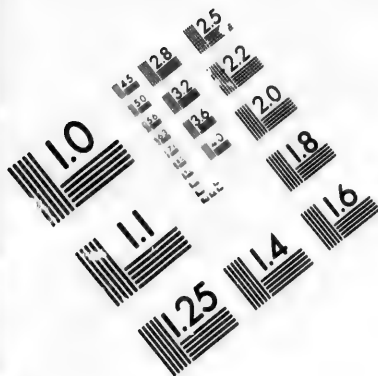
"DEAR FRIEND:

"When do you have your vacation, or, as Pliny asks (for I bethink me that I am addressing a schoolmaster), *quousque calcei nusquam, feriata toga?*\* If in July or August, and you propose to take London on your way, I think I may be able to meet you there, as I think of running up to town to meet my daughter Clara on her return from the seminary. If an immediate visit to Torweston is not a part of your plan, who knows that we may not be able to pass a few weeks together,—say in seeing Holland, or in some quiet retreat in Normandy? At any rate, let me know when your vacation is to come, and if you can meet me in London.

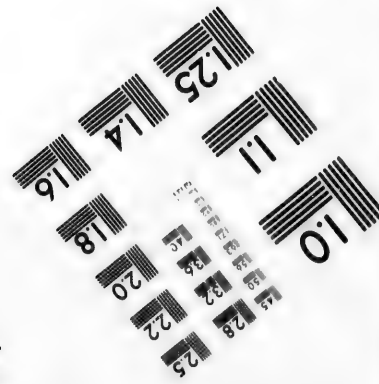
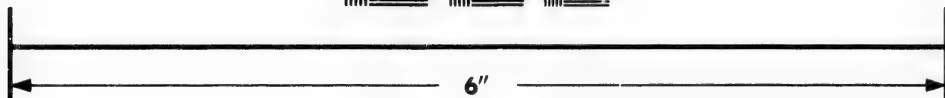
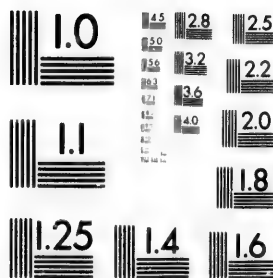
"A strong current of Revivalism swept over this whole district during the latter part of the winter. It lasted nearly

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\* "How long will your shoes not be worn and your toga laid aside?"—in other words, How long will you remain in the country?

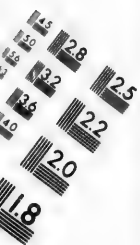


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two months, Torweston being very much influenced. A certain Rev. Charles Catt,—whom perhaps you remember,—was especially distinguished throughout the movement, and I hear that he has probably 'brought in' two or three hundred penitents. Having driven the Devil out of Torweston, this great apostle sighed, like Cæsar, for more worlds to conquer, and,—as I all along feared would be the case,—he determined to inscribe the name of Tormavy on his escutcheon. Twice a week a contingent from Torweston invaded our little hamlet, and the Bryanite mission-hall was crowded. Even the school children were infected with the excitement, and many little scapegraces were suddenly developed into smug-faced hypocrites, of course imitating their elders. I made some notes at the time, out of which may possibly grow a paper for one of the Catholic organs. Of course, the usual results will in due time be made manifest, and I have every reason to believe that many of our young men found in this Revival a golden opportunity. I almost think the excitement would have continued until now but for an unfortunate accident which has temporarily obscured the light of the Rev. Charles (he should be the Rev. Tom) Catt.

"You probably remember Big Elliott; he lives in a cottage on the confines of Torweston and Tormavy. He is, as everybody knows, a daring poacher, and I fancy that, what with his nightly raids on the Squire's preserves, and his success as a fisherman, he does fairly well,—much better than most of his neighbours. Our Revival had been in full blast about a month, when one Sunday evening it attained its culmination. The Rev. Catt on this occasion surpassed himself. His exhortations had wrought his hearers to boiling point, and the mission-hall was filled with Hallelujahs! while the women, and many among the men, wept and shouted. On the principle that 'the better the day, the better the deed,' Big Elliott and a young man named Clymo had planned a poaching expedition for this same evening. They sallied forth between eight and nine o'clock, taking their way through the fields along the cliffs. About a mile from the hamlet the fields undulate almost like the waves of the Channel which they border. It is a delightful place for a lounge in spring or summer, but I fear I shall never enjoy it quite so much as I used to, because of this, its latest association. However, I must not digress. The night was rather dark, but this did not trouble

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Elliott, who could find his way over the country blindfolded. In the centre of one of the depressions formed by the undulations of the land, Big Ellicott suddenly stopped and, placing his hand upon Clymo's mouth, he quietly drew his comrade to the ground. Then, snake-like, they both crept onward until, —but how can I write it? They saw enough, however, to assure them that a mystic rite was being performed; and the profane hand of Big Elliott for a moment touched the person of the priestess. There was a shriek, an oath, and then came the flash of Clymo's dark lantern. Certainly it was a strange, not to say an embarrassing tableau, the two most conspicuous figures being the Rev. Charles Catt and the belle of Tormavy, old Jenkins' second daughter. The young woman had but lately been 'convinced of sin,' and on this very evening she had taken her place in the penitents' seat down at the mission-hall. I will not dwell on the proposition made by Big Elliott, —which was at once scornfully repudiated by the girl. Poor foolish creature! she had been beguiled by the infamous arts of the scoundrel who had from his place in the pulpit marked her for his prey. Next morning the story was public property; of course, there were denials, but virtually there was no defence. The Rev. Charles Catt has left the circuit, and our honest fisherfolk are once more recovering their reason.

"On Christmas Day I attended morning service at Culm Tor. Dr. Fevre is our family doctor, if one may use that term with respect to a family that so seldom needs doctoring. Fevre is a moderately High Churchman, as you know. He has not forgotten you, as he plumes himself on having sagaciously predicted that you would sooner or later 'go over to Rome.' In order to please Fevre,—mind you, I do not owe him anything, so spare your sarcasm,—I went to Church on Christmas Day. The sermon was preached by a clergyman who had but recently taken priest's orders. His name is Kirke,—the Hon. and Rev. Richmond Kirke,—a sort of cousin to the rector of Culm Tor. He is of good family and very wealthy, and Fevre says that it looks very much as though your old acquaintance, Toynbee's pretty niece, will ere long become Mrs. Kirke. If so, the Hon. and Rev. Richmond ought to think himself in luck. I was formally introduced to her after service, and I assure you that she is a splendid girl, as good as she is beautiful. It was lucky for you that you did not leave your heart in the old grammar school.

"I shall expect a letter from you every day until it comes, and do not forget that he who writes seldom should write long.

"Faithfully yours,  
"LAMBERT WALLACE."

While Desmond was reading his letter, Mr. Flowers had gone to breakfast ; had he been present he could hardly have failed to notice that the young man was strangely moved,—so much so, indeed, that the other letter remained unheeded. At any time the thought of Edith was wont to set his heart throbbing with a peculiarly painful flutter ; but the garrulous Lieutenant little recked of the sudden torture his words would occasion Desmond. Mechanically the young man tore open the other envelope ; but it was some time ere he could centre his mind on the letter itself. It was, to be sure, a peculiar handwriting, every letter leading a sort of quasi-independent existence :—

"CARRIG DESMOND, Co. Carlow, Ireland,  
"May 19, 1872.

"DEAR COUSIN,—I can see you start as you read these two words, and small blame to you for it. However, my cousin you must be, since your grandfather, Garret Desmond, was my father's own brother. Garret was the second son, my father the first. The one put on King George's livery, the other lived and died in the home of his fathers. That home is also, and has always been, my home ; it is a fine old place,—all that remains of the once magnificent domains of a noble family.

"I am a widower and childless, my only son having died two years ago from an accident in hunting. I have a nephew who is a priest somewhere in the County Wicklow, but no other relatives nearer than yourself. It was only after my boy's misfortune that I remembered having heard my father speak with regret of his brother Garret, who had forgotten the family honour and betaken himself to some low calling and a heretic wife in England. It seemed to me that I ought to try and find out something about my own blood, and last year my lawyer quietly crossed the Channel and found out all I wished to learn.

"I am thankful, my dear boy, that you have had the grace given you to come back to the bosom of your forefathers'

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Church. I am not very religious,—with sorrow I write it,—myself, but I know what is right, anyway. I am told that the position you occupy is a very respectable one; but I want you to understand that there is no need for you to work for a living. Come to your father's old home, and fill the place of my own poor boy; and when it is the will of God for me to join him I shall go all the more willingly that I know the place will still be in the possession of a Desmond.

"Send me your picture if you have one; if not, get it taken for the purpose.

"God bless you!

"Your loving cousin,

"MAURICE O'RUARC DESMOND.

"P.S.—The O'Ruarc in my name is from my mother's family, —one old as the Wicklow mountains. My estate brings in something more than £2,000 a year. Please God, you will one day be a landlord; though I fear the agitators will sooner or later rob us of all we have."

Here was news indeed. Yet Hugh hastily thrust his cousin's letter into his pocket, while he read and re-read Mr. Wallace's allusions to Edith Allyn. Could there be any foundation for Dr. Fevre's suspicion, or was it mere village gossip? How could he possibly ascertain the truth? Not by writing to Edith, for his letter to her, written immediately before leaving Torweston, rendered it almost impossible for him to do so. After all, there appeared no other course to follow than to write at once to the Lieutenant, and to cautiously sound him on the matter. Meanwhile, there was work to be done, and, as a preliminary thereto, breakfast to partake of.

During the day Desmond wrote to Mr. Wallace. Of course, he told his friend the strange news contained in the letter from Ireland, and asked him whether he would object to a visit to Carrig Desmond during the approaching vacation. In this letter the following sentences seemed to be prompted by friendly curiosity:

"You did not say that Mr. Kirke's sermon affected you very strongly. Is it as a preacher that he has made progress elsewhere? or may not Dr. Fevre, whom I remember as a great gossip, have too hastily accepted the opinion of his garrulous old lady patients? I do not consider Miss Allyn

one to be wooed and won quite so hastily as Fevre's assumption would induce one to surmise must be the case in this instance, as I suppose Mr. Kirke cannot have been long at Culm Tor. If you know anything more of this matter, I should like to know it, as I respect Miss Allyn very much."

In the evening, Mr. Flowers having expressed a desire to walk, he and Desmond sauntered down to the village. The fire in the parlour of the "Guisborough Arms" shone bright and clear, and they were both well pleased to find seats near it. Joshua Appleton and a stranger, whose appearance betokened that he belonged to the ubiquitous fraternity of commercial travellers, also occupied seats near the fire, the former smoking a long churchwarden pipe, the latter a cigar. The commercial gentleman, like most of his class, was a keen-eyed, smart-looking fellow, who seemed well able to look after his own interests under any circumstances. Englishmen generally begin their conversation by alluding to the weather, a topic of such general interest that it often serves the purpose of a formal introduction.

"Beautiful spring weather, sir," said the traveller to Joshua; "the wheat and barley look well everywhere throughout the midlands."

"Yes, sir," replied Appleton, "I think so; at least report says so of the county of Rutland; I am glad to hear from you that the same may be said of other parts of the country. However, during the last three or four years the promise of a good spring-time has been frustrated by the rains of summer. Some of our farmers have been sorely pinched of late, sir. I hope there will be no necessity to pray God to 'send us such weather as that we may receive the fruits of the earth in due season.'"

A peculiar smile passed over the countenance of the commercial traveller, which, being observed by Joshua, at once aroused that inquisitive gentleman's curiosity.

"You smile, sir," he remarked, "not, I hope, at the notion of beseeching the Almighty for fair weather?"

"Well, sir," answered the other, "since you have put the question, I am bound to say I do. Yes, sir; I do smile for that very reason; because I do not believe that the weather is influenced either by man's prayers or man's tears."

"But, sir," said Joshua, in his most forcible Johnsonian manner; "but, sir, that savours of downright atheism. Why,

really, you horrify me ; such an assertion, I am sure, was never before made in this vicinity since the time of the Druids."

"Certainly not in their time, then," said the traveller, "because I think I have heard or read that they, like all priests, used incantations to affect the weather."

"Pardon me, sir," interposed Desmond, "but even the Pagans were wiser in their generation than you,—ignorant though they were of divine revelation,—for even the poet Hesiod affirms that if Zeus be propitious, the industrious peasant will secure a good harvest."

"Gentlemen," said the commercial man, "I am not a scholar, as you may infer from my profession, and consequently I am not able to speak about the ancient poets. Permit me to observe, however, that, arguing from the standpoint of Natural Religion merely, I do not see how the unchangeable laws of God could be interfered with or varied by human petitions or desires."

"Natural Religion," said Mr. Flowers, "while assuring us that there is, that there must be, a God, has to be supplemented by revelation, without which we could know nothing of the will of the Deity."

"Then, sir, I take it that the Deity from the first desired that his will should be known by man?" queried the traveller.

"Of course," broke in the parish clerk, "of course ; and this will we find revealed in the Bible."

"In the Bible as explained by the Holy Catholic Church, its Divinely appointed custodian and explainer," said Desmond.

"In that case, gentlemen," said the commercial man, "we ought to suppose that this Bible would have been given openly and freely to the whole of mankind ; that its authority should be unquestionably shown by indubitable marks of its supernatural origin ; that in every respect it should be able to withstand the closest examination. In short, if God desired to make himself and his will known to all the human race by means of writings inspired by himself, not only would these writings be superior to criticism, but they would certainly never have been for thousands of years confined to a small and comparatively insignificant portion of mankind. Surely this is reasonable, eh?"

By way of answer, the parish clerk edged his chair away some distance from the speaker. Joshua's face bore traces of much suppressed excitement, but he contrived to appear rather

as though he commiserated the stranger. Host Richards stood behind Desmond's chair, his eyes intently fixed on his new guest. For a few seconds no one broke the silence, but at length Hugh Desmond spoke.

"I am sorry, sir," he said, "that you should venture to call in question the mysterious ways of Divine Wisdom. It seems to me that you are in great danger of absolute infidelity, which may God avert ! I see in your case an example of the evil of which I spoke to my friend here this morning,—Unbelief is the natural result of the wretched principle of free inquiry which animated the leaders of the so-called Reformation."

"But which you, sir," said the stranger, "would doubtless prefer to term the Deformation. Pardon me, my good sir ; I assure you I mean no disrespect. You and your friend are, I perceive Roman Catholics ; and your creed is, in some respects, apparently more logical and regular than that of the one or two hundred denominations of Protestants among us. Allow me, however, to remind you that some of the greatest Infidels, as you call them, have been produced by your own Church. You are much better qualified than I am to examine the title-deeds, historically, of Christianity, but I fancy you are not fully aware of the results of scientific investigation in our day. Study these, sirs, and you will then see for yourselves that a greater revelation has come to the world ; a revelation that is not a hole and corner thing to be restricted to the few ; a revelation which enables us to speak with some confidence in the universality of nature's laws, and which leaves the rational mind no alternative but to regard the Bible narratives of a creation, a deluge, and all the rest of it as things not to be reconciled with science and experience,—indeed, as irreconcilable with the statements of the Bible itself."

Joshua Appleton was aghast. He said nothing, but laying down his long churchwarden, he bade the party a short "good-night," and left the room.

"The old gentleman," said the traveller, "is somewhat hurt by my plain speaking. It is not my fault, however ; he himself invited my opinion."

"Sir," said Desmond, "I will not deny that your words have shocked me very much. I can only say that I hope your opinions are peculiar to yourself, or I shall dread their effect upon society."

"Peculiar to myself?" inquired the stranger. "No, indeed. I am, sir, what is termed a Secularist, and I assure you that there are many thousands who hold similar views in this country. There are societies established to disseminate and encourage Freethought principles, and our literature is widely circulated."

"I have heard something of this before," said Mr. Flowers. "I confess, not altogether without a certain degree of what I may term painful satisfaction, because I think that the excesses resulting from this infidel result of Protestantism will in God's good time lead to the restoration of the Church in the hearts and affections of the people. Depend upon it, sir, that the Catholic Church will refute and confound Infidelity, while this chameleon-like thing which you term Science, will in due time overturn itself. It is written that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church of Christ.'"

"The gates of hell may not, because I cannot quite see how gates or doors may be regarded as combative," said the traveller; "but depend upon it, friend, that, in reason enlightened by science, your Church and every other will find a master. The free enquirer cannot now be handed over to the secular arm to be purged with fire; and history teaches us how that former religions have, one after the other, been subverted. Why may it not be so with yours?"

"You do not talk quite like a,—I mean, not altogether as gentlemen of your calling ordinarily do," said Hugh. "Pardon me, but I hope I am not offensive."

"Not at all so," said the other; "I take your words as complimentary. Well, sir, there are among commercial travellers many shrewd reasoners and good talkers,—many men of wide reading in modern literature. I advance no such claims; but I would say that I was, until about five years ago, a Baptist minister."

"Indeed," said Mr. Flowers, "and may we ask if being a Baptist minister is to be regarded as preparatory or preliminary to becoming a,—what do you call it?—a Secularist?"

"By no means," said the traveller; "there are among the Baptists as much blindness, ignorance, and superstition as among Catholics,—no offence. I first began to think of these things after I once over-hastily ventured to reply on a public platform to a certain Secular lecturer. I had previously considered the evidences I would allege; but the lecturer

exploded them and discomfited me. This set me to thinking and reading,—and finally I found myself compelled to repudiate Christianity. This is how I became a commercial traveller; and I may add that I like the business. It enables me to study men; and I may just as well acknowledge that I utilize my opportunities to encourage folks to think for themselves. Who knows what may result only from this discourse? However, gentlemen, good night! I have to be stirring early to-morrow." The ex-minister thereupon went for his candle, and Flowers and our hero soon after left the inn.

On the whole, this had proved rather an exciting day for the young organist; but he himself felt, on retiring for the night, that the discourse at the "Guisborough Arms" was by far the most important feature in the day's record. For the first time in his life he had encountered Scepticism, and ere he betook himself to his couch he prayed long and earnestly for the grace of "final perseverance" in the faith. But even while he prayed, a shadowy doubt arose in his mind, and his sleep that night was strangely troubled and his dreams were perturbed. Had he come to the "parting of the ways"? Time will tell.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH DOUBTS ARE SUGGESTED AND A DOUBT REMOVED.

THE Rev. George Champernowne, M.A., was alone in his study. It was Thursday afternoon, the time when the vicar invariably entered upon the laborious duty of preparing his sermons for the ensuing Sunday. It was a cozy room, and the walls were well lined with book-shelves from floor to ceiling. Mr. Champernowne was wont to call it his den, and it certainly was an apartment in which he was well-nigh as secure from intrusion as though it were the retreat of a grizzly bear. Had his lot been cast in the reign of that most high and mighty prince James, who came down upon England with a well-sharpened appetite, "upon the setting of that bright occidental star, Queen Elizabeth of most happy memory," the vicar of Holmwood would have stood a poor chance of being elevated to the episcopal bench, inasmuch as he was a most inveterate smoker. For this all-powerful



reason, his studies were seldom interrupted, except in cases of absolute necessity, neither his wife nor her domestics being particularly fond of inhaling the fumes of the strong tobacco which the parson patronized, and which he used to excess while constructing his sermons,—apparently on the principle of *ex fumo dare lucem*.\*

Mr. Champernowne was in the habit of preaching controversial sermons, for which, indeed, both by nature and education, he was very well fitted. Like most combative men, he was short in stature, red-faced, and somewhat bullet-headed. Although he owed his preferment to the Countess's regard for her cousin, the clergyman was fully cognizant of his duty to the Church of England, and it is but just to acknowledge that he performed that duty well. In every respect he was armed *de pied en cap* against Romanism, and the specious sermons of Father Nevins, at the Chapel, were more than neutralized by the really able discourses at the parish Church, in which the dignity, rights and claims of the English Church were triumphantly vindicated. Besides having taken a high place in classics at the University, Mr. Champernowne was a keen logician, and the visitors at the Hall were seldom at a loss for polemic subjects after morning service on Sunday.

The Vicar had chosen his text,—the fifth verse of Psalm 46 : "God is in the midst of her ; therefore shall she not be removed ; God shall help her, and that right early." Being in good condition, and his tobacco burning freely, the parson experienced little difficulty in commencing his sermon, in itself a good omen, as we have heard literates and penny-a-liners often declare. His pen was gliding pretty rapidly over the paper, and everything promised well for a good discourse. Having reached the bottom of the first folio, Mr. Champernowne was moved to read his introductory sentences, which he did aloud :

"It has been said of the judicious Hooker that he effected two great things for the English Church, as it existed in his day. First, he provided her with a broad, intelligible, and worthy theory ; secondly, he demonstrated her thorough capability to be the Church of a great people and nation, her adaptation to man's nature and to human society, the reasonableness of her customs, the breadth and scope of her aims and

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\* " Out of smoke to bring light."

freedom of her working when compared with the narrowness of all other bodies and so-called churches which apparently conspire to occupy her place. It seems to me that this great and historic Church is the means provided by Almighty God for the maintenance and continuous progression of the life of this dear England of ours, a religious life that does not, cannot, find expression or exercise in any or all of the more than two hundred jarring sects of to-day: a religious life which continues to manifest itself by, and through, the one Church which has so grandly marched onward throughout the centuries from the time when the Saxon invaders of our island were won to the faith of Jesus by the zealous Scoto-Irish missionaries, who derived their consecration and mission, not from usurping Rome, but from independent Keltic bishops. Since the time when Virgilius of Arles consecrated Augustine, we are able clearly to observe the unbroken heritage and continuity of this Church, a Church destined in God's good time to —"

Here the Vicar found himself at the bottom of the page, and at this moment came a knock at the door, followed by the entrance of a servant.

"If you please, sir, Mr. Desmond, from the Hall, would like to see you," and here the young woman began to cough, compelled thereto by the smoke.

"Mr. Desmond, eh?" said the clergyman, looking regretfully at his manuscript; "um! well, yes, show him in, Mary."

Upon entering the study, Hugh himself,—albeit no stranger to tobacco,—was fain to cough a little. Observing this, Mr. Champernowne threw up the window as far as possible, and then, shaking the young man heartily by the hand, requested him to be seated.

"A bad habit this of mine," he said, "for which I fear I can allege neither excuse nor precedent from those of my cloth. Our old friends the ancients, were, at any rate, no slaves to tobacco."

"Except we liberally construe the line, '*Pressa Venafranae quod bacca remisit olivæ*,'" \* answered his visitor.

"Ha, ha!" said the Vicar, "*bacca*, eh? Well, it seems to me that you have a bad habit also. I wish you could have

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\* "What the pressed berry of Venafrican olive yielded,"—an attempt at punning which almost proves that Hugh Desmond would pick a pocket,

known Calverley, of Christ's College, of whom in my Cambridge days we all expected so much, and who might have been, had he been poorer in this world's goods, the glory of this our modern England. As a punster, whether in Latin or in English, he is unrivalled. Ah, there were giants in those days. Seeley, the *Ecce Homo* man, Walter Besant, Gell,—but Calverley was in all things the chief. And as for tobacco, well, who does not know his marvellous song in praise of the weed?"

"I assure you," said Desmond, "that I never heard it. My friend and teacher, however, was an Oxford man, so I suppose he had no knowledge of your Cambridge worthies."

"At any rate, it must have been many years after your friend's time," said the clergyman. "However, I suppose the power and genius of our race have not departed; the coming men, who are now boys at school or in pinafores, will worthily maintain that pre-eminence of mind and body which is their hereditary birthright. Yes, my young friend, I have no apprehension of that; depend upon it that the Anglo-Saxon race will one day lead the world."

"It seems to me, sir," said Hugh, "that it does so already; but you are forgetting Calverley's song."

"Ah, you would like to hear it? Well, I cannot pretend to sing it, as I have a voice like a frog going a-wooing, but I can repeat it."

"There is a rapture exceeding all measure,  
Left to enliven this sorrowful world;  
Who does not think of that moment with pleasure  
When first round his lips the wreathing smoke curled?  
Parents look grave or sick,  
Call it a nasty trick,  
Say it is ruinous—say it is wrong;  
Happy indeed his lot,  
Who for these caring not,  
Puffs like a chimney-pot  
All the day long.

"Some who are troubled with endless entreaties,  
Strive for a time this delight to forego;  
Vain are their efforts, their failure complete is,—  
Life without smoking's unbearably slow.  
Soon their mistake they find,  
Leave all such thoughts behind,

Wise resolutions all vanish in smoke ;  
 And to their cost they see,  
 That if their life must be  
 Unfunigatory,  
 'Twill be no joke.

"Ladies may talk of their otto of roses,—  
 Oh, there is something that's better by far !  
 Believe me, an odour more fragrant reposes  
 In a whiff from a pipe or a penny cigar.  
 Healer of every smart,  
 Soother of every heart,  
 Would I could tell all thy praises in song.  
 Incense at Pleasure's shrine,  
 Oh, that thy fumes divine  
 Curled round this nose of mine  
 All the day long."

"There," said Mr. Champernowne, "is it not a pity that Raleigh is not alive just now to hear that?"

"I wonder what an old Sunday-school teacher I once had,—a rabid anti-tobacco man and Teetotaler,—would say if he heard it?" said Desmond. "It is really very good, and I must ask for a copy of it at your leisure."

"Never mind your rabid *Antis*, young man. They crop up everywhere, like fanatics in religion; but, after all is said, healthy common sense must always be in the ascendant. But pardon me: this, you see, is one of my sermon days; is there anything I can do for you? If so, let me know at once."

"I will not detain you long, sir," replied Hugh; "but the fact is I am rather troubled in mind. Naturally, of course, I have laid the matter before my confessor,—and, indeed, I have talked it over with Father Nevins outside of the confessional,—but still I am perplexed and sorely troubled."

"Perplexed and troubled?" inquired the Vicar: "are you beginning to realize that you have wandered out of the safer way; that your change of communion was a leap in the dark; and that, after all, the grand old historic Church of England can alone, for Englishmen, satisfy the intellect and the emotions, can alone maintain and preserve the continuity between the past and the future, without stigmatizing the one or endeavouring by futile anathemas to impede the other? If so, I rejoice to know it." And the zealous Anglican once more grasped and shook the young man's hand.

"No, Mr. Champernowne, my trouble does not lie in that direction, although I *do* sometimes think my change, as you term it, was made without adequate study of the historical claims of the Anglican Church, and especially without a fair examination of the question of the validity of Anglican orders. No, sir; the truth is, that, a fortnight ago, I encountered a commercial traveller, down at the "Arms," who called himself a Secularist. He was, I think, a pronounced infidel, and his words have troubled me very much since."

"Ah, yes, I see," said the Vicar; "I heard something of this from Appleton. And so you are being troubled by doubts, doubts that go to the very foundation of Christianity,—perhaps of all religion? You have talked with Mr. Nevins?—well, since it was not under the seal of confession, perhaps you will not object to tell me what he said? Of course, I know we are speaking as man with man,—as friend with friend. Well, what did Mr. Nevins say?"

"His advice was doubtless excellent," said Hugh, "but I find it rather ineffectual. I cannot repel or even parry a doubt by reciting the *Angelus*; and even while at my prayers the temptations assail me. In short, the Devil seems to be always at my elbow ever since I met that man."

"My lad," said the clergyman, "permit me to say freely what I think. At Christ's, my chums used to call me Cautious Champy,—I suppose because I was somewhat clear-headed and practical. Well now, you see, you missed the advantages of a public school: your education, excellent though I know it was, threw you back upon yourself when you should have mingled with your fellows. Fortunately,—and, indeed, I almost marvel at this,—you did not develop into a prig, as others would have done, and do, under like circumstances; but you became an ascetic, a devotee,—in short, a fanatic. Of the world and its ways, of the burning questions of the time, you knew little or nothing. That education had to come later on,—indeed, you are even now being educated by the world. Were you now to retire into a monastery,—say to Mount Melleray in Ireland,—you could not escape. The seed has been sown, and it must germinate,—it depends upon yourself and the Divine Grace whether the harvest is to be wheat or tares."

"I do not know," answered Hugh, "perhaps you are right. I have written out a Protestation of Faith by St. Vincent of

Ferrers, which I have fastened to the wall of my bedroom, and which I repeat before retiring to rest ; yet I do not know that it helps me."

"I know it," said the Vicar, "it is a protestation *nunc pro tunc* that you will live and die in the Christian, or the Catholic faith. Believe me, all this will avail you but little. You must fairly and squarely fight your doubts, and for this purpose I will lend you all the best evidential books in my library. You will find, with God's blessing, that Christianity is not at war with reason. My dear fellow, this has been my case also ; depend upon it that your bounden duty is to use the reason God has given you, and depend upon it that your faith will be strengthened thereby. Come on Monday for the books. And now, Good bye ! be not afraid : I tell you that Infidelity can be vanquished on the ground of its own choosing."

"Well, sir," said Desmond, "I thank you very much, and I will follow your advice. Indeed, I feel better, I think, already for your assurance ; as it was the sense that I was acting like a timorous recreant that troubled me so. By the way, before I go, let me call your attention to the bridge over the brook near the vicarage gate. A carriage from the Hall was before me as I came here, and the driver had to lead his horses over the bridge."

"Ah, it was Lady Blanche, who was to call upon Mrs. Champernowne, this afternoon, I think. That heavy rain of last week undermined the parapet on the left hand side ; but the gardener says it will be dry enough for us to repair it to-morrow. All the same, I will have a lantern hung up there to-night. Good bye ! God bless you !"

Left once more to himself, the Vicar refilled his meerschaum, and in a few minutes he was again enveloped in a cloud of controversial theology and smoke. As Desmond approached the gate of the vicarage grounds, he perceived that some preparation had already been made to repair the broken wall of the little bridge. It was, at present, unquestionably a somewhat dangerous place for an unskilled coachman, the bridge being very narrow, while the brook murmured along a rocky bed at least fourteen feet below the level of the road. Hugh was glad to know that Mr. Champernowne had ordered the immediate repair of the wall. Just as he stepped upon the bridge,—which was a solid structure of hewn stone,—Desmond



heard the sound of wheels on the gravel path, and, looking backward, he saw Lady Blanche's carriage. The coachman, aware of the fallen wall, was holding in a pair of very unwilling horses, and at the moment when the organist opened the gate the carriage stopped. A middle-aged lady, who sat beside the Earl's daughter, had negligently dropped either her handkerchief or a wrap, and the coachman had got down to recover it. Desmond, who was waiting to shut the gate, was suddenly horrified to see the horses start off at a brisk trot before the coachman came up to the carriage. A whisk of the tail of one of the animals had drawn the lines about their heels, and the high-spirited horses were now rushing along the path. Hugh saw that the chances were a thousand to one against the carriage being kept strictly to the middle of the bridge,—indeed, it was clearly inclining to the left side. There was no time for hesitation,—scarcely enough for thinking; but in a moment or two he had re-crossed the little bridge, and running straight to the horses' heads, at the imminent peril of being knocked down and over-run, he succeeded, by sheer strength and weight, in arresting their progress.

"Lady Blanche," he cried, "you must get out and cross the bridge on foot. Look sharp, Jarvis! these horses are very restless."

Jarvis,—who was trembling like an aspen,—assisted the two ladies to descend, and then, coming to Hugh's assistance, he patted and coaxed the animals until their calmness was assured, after which he led them carefully over the bridge and into the road. The two ladies showed no other sign of fear beyond their extreme paleness, the elder of the two,—Lady Margaret Constable,—appearing rather tremulous, however, as indeed she might have been excused for doing. The hero of the adventure, however, presented a sorry spectacle. His hat had been thrown to the ground and trampled, and the right sleeve of his coat, torn by some attachment of horse furniture, allowed the blood from a slight laceration of the arm to be plainly seen. He, too, was pale, as even an athlete would have been after such a struggle; and it will not, I hope, lessen the reader's interest in the young man if I add that he looked very much as though he wanted to sit or lie down.

"Mr. Desmond," said Lady Blanche, extending her hand, "you have done a noble, gallant action, and have saved our lives. We will not trouble you now with expressions of

gratitude ; but I insist that you take my arm to the carriage. In a few minutes we can be home. Margaret, hasten and arrange the cushions, he looks about to faint ! For heaven's sake, do make haste ! ”

Lady Margaret hurried toward the road, while Desmond protested that he was not seriously hurt or weakened, and begged to be allowed to walk to Holmwood.

“ Not another word ! ” said Lady Blanche ; “ not another word ! I know your imperative nature ; but this time I insist. Nay, take my arm ;—are you afraid of me ? have you an aversion to me ? Hugh Desmond, will not you suffer her whose life you have just now saved to lead you to the carriage ? ”

As he looked into the dark, and now reproachful, eyes of the lovely lady who thus entreated and commanded, Hugh Desmond realized, almost with consternation, that something like that which men term Destiny was at work interweaving the warp and woof of their respective lives.

“ Lady Blanche,” he said, as he looked into her eyes as though he would fain read her most secret thought, “ let it be as you will, although you honour me too much and rate my service too highly. Not, I mean, with respect to saving your lives,—for, indeed, thanks to God, I have been the means of doing that,—but in so far as I have incurred danger by my action. Remember, however, that I am but the poor plebeian music-master, and no meet companion for—— ”

“ For an Earl's daughter, you would say ? ” answered the lady, as they slowly crossed the bridge. “ As if I had not long since known that in your inmost thoughts you could say to me as the ‘ unguiled ’ one said to Clara Vere de Vere—

“ ‘ Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came. ’ ”

Listen to me, Hugh Desmond. You know the Phoenix Tower. Let it be as I will, and meet me there to-morrow at noon. I must, and will, tell you what I have long felt ;—*I must and will*. One moment,”—and she arrested their farther progress,—“ here comes Margaret ; say, shall it be so ? ”

“ But, your ladyship,” began Hugh, “ think of —— ”

“ I will think of nothing. Let me whisper : *Hugh Desmond, I love you better than my life !* There : will you meet me now ? ”

"Great God!" said Desmond; "yes, if only to cure this awful madness."

In the landau those two sat facing each other. Not even physical pain prevented Desmond from showing in some measure that he had undergone a severe mental shock, and there was even some show of commiseration in the look directed so continuously toward Lady Blanche. Love him! the idea was well nigh impossible, for what could be the end of an affection so misplaced? Happily, the letter from his cousin Maurice suggested one way out of the perplexity: he would resign his situation and take refuge in Ireland. Only that way lay deliverance; otherwise there would be sensation, scandal, and untold misery.

As for the lady, she, too, kept her eyes fastened on the countenance of her rescuer; but her look was one of unmistakable triumph, resolution, and love. Yes, love, however strange it may seem to thee, dear reader, as I acknowledge it seems most strange and unaccountable to me. Were this a novel, I would not have dared such a flight of fancy; but, as I have already assured thee, this is the record of a life. Ask me not to explain the promptings of the human mind; but betake thee to thy closet or secret chamber, and there reading the fourth *Æneid* discover, if thou canst, why it was that the unhappy Dido nourished in her veins the wound, and was consumed with secret fire. The Bible tells us that among the things "too wonderful" for Solomon to understand was "the way of a man with a maid," and I, who am as nothing in comparison with Solomon, find it even much harder to account for the way of a maid with a man.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH MR. FLOWERS SEES A GHOST.

THE Earl of Guisborough was in the library. It was a very long and comparatively narrow room, having at one end an arched recess, which was ornamented with a picture by an eminent Academician,—that of a young lady on a white horse advancing with measured steps through the gateway of an ancient castle. A gallery of elaborately carved black oak ran along the front side of the room, the opposite

wall, except where the wide fireplace stood within the shelter of a fine mantelpiece, being hidden by well-filled book-shelves. Were it possible for one to become reconciled to the loss of liberty, surely this would be a place wherein even imprisonment would be deprived of its bitterness. How like the irony of Fate it is that nearly always the conditions which favour the gathering of such a thesaurus of the loftiest productions of the human mind should also remove the strongest incentive to their proper use!

The Earl stood with his back to the fireplace, listening with evident interest to his chaplain, who, seated beside the long library table, had turned his chair half round so that his profile was presented toward the nobleman, his right hand resting on an open book.

"Yes, my lord," said the priest, after a brief pause, "it was a brave and courageous deed. Yet, knowing the young man as well as I do, I think I should have been more surprised had he acted less promptly. The Irish blood in his veins—and, as I have already told your lordship, he comes directly from the great Desmond around whose standard the south of Ireland once rallied,—causes his mind to work in flashes. We characterize such natures as impulsive; they are always swift to act, and dangerously rapid in thinking."

"Which possibly explains the difficulty we have experienced in ruling the sister island, eh?" said the Earl.

"In one sense, yes," replied Father Nevins, "because this very impulsiveness of character has always stood in the way of combination and unity. Even without their internecine religious differences the Irish would be hard to govern either from within or without. Yet they are easily influenced by their emotions; win their affection and they will be yours for ever. No, my lord; if my advice may influence your lordship, I do not think I would offer Mr. Desmond anything like a reward or any other recognition than thanks."

"You are right, Father Nevins, and I am much obliged to you for presenting the case in its proper light. I wish you to remain during the interview; I would summon my daughter, but I am almost afraid that she will scarcely be so composed as I could wish her to be. She, too, is impulsive. During our audience with the Holy Father, Lady Guisborough was affected even to tears. Our little Blanche,—then about five or six years old,—in some manner connected the Pope with the

cause of her mamma's weeping ; and, very much to my surprise and regret, she, in her childish way, made what was really a formidable attack on the person of his Holiness, and it was some time before I could pacify her. However, I wish you to be present,"—and here his lordship rang the bell. "Roberts," said the Earl, as the servant appeared, "I wish to see Mr. Desmond, the choir-master, here in the library ;" and the man of powder and livery vanished as noiselessly as he came.

"So this young man will, you tell me, probably be a landed gentleman in course of time," said the Earl. "Well, had it been otherwise, and if he felt the vocation, I would have gladly assisted him to the priesthood."

"Yes, my lord, I read his cousin's letter ; but even were it otherwise, I do not think Mr. Desmond would have entered the Church."

"You mean, would have taken orders, Father Nevins, I presume?" inquired the Earl, who, like many other educated Roman Catholics, did not appear altogether to relish the custom, often so evident among the clergy, of speaking of the Church precisely as though it consisted wholly of bishops, priests and nuns.

"Of course," assented the chaplain, "and I base my opinion mainly upon my own observation. I am sure that he will in time lead a much more active, stirring life."

Here the door opened, the footman entered and, with a profound bow to his master, allowed Desmond to enter the library, and again retired.

"How do you do, Mr. Desmond?" said the Earl. "I requested your presence here this morning in order that I may thank you most sincerely for your gallant rescue of my daughter and Lady Margaret Constable from what, had it not been for your courage and presence of mind, would have been a frightful accident. Allow me, also, on the part of the ladies, to convey the assurance of their lasting gratitude. I confess I should be glad to show in some manner likely to benefit you, or to improve your fortunes in life, my sense of the obligation under which you have laid us all, although, as I learn from Father Nevins, Providence has opened to you the prospect of a future for which your education and natural endowments seem specially to have fitted you. Let me assure you, however, that you may always count upon my influence to forward your

interests, whenever you may feel that that influence would be of service to you."

"I thank your lordship very much for your kind words and good opinion," answered the organist; "and I am deeply grateful to Almighty God that he permitted me to be the instrument of his mercy and loving-kindness. As for what I did, it was by no means a very daring or perilous exploit, and I am amply repaid by the kind and flattering recognition of your lordship and the ladies. There is, however, one favour that I would like to prefer to your lordship."

"Let me know it at once, if you please, Mr. Desmond. You may be sure that it will be granted, I think."

"Well, my lord, Jarvis, the coachman, apprehends that he has incurred your displeasure. He explained to me last night that there would have been little danger but for the broken wall at the bridge, as the horses could not have gone beyond the gate of the vicarage. May I venture so far as to intercede for him with your lordship?"

"He displayed a want of judgment, however, that nearly resulted in the loss of two or three lives,"—and the Earl of Guisborough frowned severely. "I had resolved upon dismissing him from my service. I will see him, however, and he shall understand what he owes to your intercession."

"Thank you, my lord. Have you any further communication to make to me?" inquired Desmond.

"Nothing more, Mr. Desmond, except to repeat the assurance of my gratitude for your gallant conduct," said the nobleman, and, with a respectful bow to his employer and the chaplain, the young man left the library.

The Phoenix Tower stood at the north-western extremity of Holmwood Park, on the very highest ground in the neighbourhood. It was said to have formed part of a castle built during the reign of the Red King, and was a four-sided structure battlemented and machicolated, having a low doorway, approached by a flight of stone steps at the end of a causeway of granite bordered by a parapet wall. Only the upper portion of the tower could be seen from the Hall, as the mound upon which the old castle once stood was now covered with grand old forest trees. As he ascended the hill, Hugh Desmond could not help being impressed by its sylvan beauty, however troubled he was at the ordeal before him. Arrived



at the causeway, he turned his gaze back toward Holmwood Hall, and a feeling of absolute terror came over him at the thought that he was about to hold a clandestine meeting with a daughter of that noble house. The occurrences of the preceding evening had unstrung his nerves, and he felt himself sadly out of harmony with the beautiful summer day. From the mullioned windows of the Hall, away on his left hand, the sunlight was reflected in dazzling showers; to the right, the beautiful gothic chapel that he loved so much shone like a gem; while straight before him rose the gray old parish church with its lofty spire, and with the tiled cottages, environed in green trees and shrubbery, nestling around its walls as if for protection. It was all so lovely, and he himself was so little in unison with it, that the young man sighed almost as though he had been oppressed with a sense of guilt. Turning once more toward the old tower, he proceeded up the causeway, pausing at length as his eyes encountered something that caused his heart to leap and throb as though it sought to burst its limits. There, at the foot of the old staircase, stood the Lady Blanche Meadows. She was apparently in the act of picking a blossom from some tall flowering shrub; her left hand rested on her bosom; but her downcast eyes saw nothing objectively. She was evidently in a reverie, the blossom remaining ungathered although its stem was bent between her fingers. Her dress, of some light fabric, closely fitted her queenly figure, the skirt being gracefully gathered up by a double-twisted cord festooned and tasseled. Hugh Desmond was compelled to acknowledge that she was superbly beautiful, a woman for whom, in the olden times, when the Phoenix Tower surmounted a lordly castle, lances would have been shivered, and whose praises minstrels would have sung. A thrill of pleasure, of pride, came over him at the thought of being beloved by such a being, and for a moment prudence and its dictates seemed to have flown to the winds. He stepped forward with something like ardour, but reason came to his assistance, and, raising his hat, he gravely saluted Lady Blanche.

Could it be that he had ever thought her haughty? Were ever such dark eyes so gentle? Did ever blush so roseate overspread so pearl-like a cheek? Reader of mine, be thankful that the chronicler's pen is halting, his hand unskilful, his blood cooled by time, or even thou thyself mightest have been

made to love her picture as that pen would have drawn it. The hand she gave him Desmond raised to his lips. Had death been the penalty, he would have ventured none the less.

"I knew you would come," she said,—and her tones sent a thrill to his very heart,—“although I dread even to imagine what you must think of me.”

"Lady Blanche," he said, "I think of you almost as I do of one of the blessed saints of heaven. I am unworthy that you should even bestow a thought on me, and I am here, not to expostulate, but to beseech you to remember who and what you are, to ask you always to regard me as one of your humble, devoted servants. I thank God that I can answer to my own conscience that never in word, act, or thought, have I sought to establish any kind of influence over your mind. Forgive me, Lady Blanche, for reminding you that you termed me proud. Yes, I am proud,—too proud to aspire even in thought where God and Nature have forbidden me to enter."

"You are here because I desired it, and I desired it because I knew that, since the artificial restrictions which kept us asunder would have to be passed, they would have to be passed by me. But first let me inquire if you were seriously hurt yesterday? Do you suffer any pain? I shall never forget your struggle with the horses."

"Nay, Lady Blanche, a good night's rest has removed the slight soreness I felt."

"Then you slept well, did you, after so frightful an adventure?"

"Except for one brief dream, my lady, yes."

"A dream? and you so wearied;—tell it me."

"Soon after I had retired, I thought a being from another world glided into my room, approached and placed her lips on my brow. It was all so real, that I was almost inclined to extend my arms to arrest the vision."

"I am glad you did not, Hugh, because one must not try to touch a spirit. And now that I have gone so far, what would you have me say?"

"My lady,——"

"Stop! You must not, shall not call me so. From the day when first I saw you, your image has been always with me. You remember that even then you were not so callous and cold as you would have me think. Remember the

wretched street girl, and remember that you have a heart. I cannot, would not, recall my affection,—it is no truant, it has gone freely and voluntarily. Do not say that I have acted unworthily; do not disparage yourself;—tell me only this: may I say I love you?"

"But consider: the daughter of an Earl to love a teacher! What will the world say? your father, mother, all your noble relatives and friends? You would be an outcast, scorned and rejected,—and in return for what? Dear Lady Blanche,—nay, Blanche if you will have it so,—think of all this and more, much more. I am a nobody, a poor mariner's son, a plebeian, who will necessarily have to struggle with the world for the very bread I eat. You must not yield to any sudden influence, any supposed predilection;—you, a lady of England, dare not condescend to me. It cannot be."

"Listen, Hugh. Were my father a king, yet still should I love you, and if you were to return my love, I would be yours in spite of fate."

"Hush, hush! I beseech you, dear lady! you scarcely know what you say."

"I know what I say. My mind has long been settled, and nothing that the priests tell us of God having appointed certain stations in life to all mankind influences me at all. Do I not know that in all ages the true aristocracy has been that of intellect, of genius, of learning? Have I not read and read far enough to well-nigh emancipate my mind from the rusty old fetters imposed on us? Is it not true,—cannot you, a scholar to whom the wisdom of old time is as freely open as the knowledge of to-day, cannot you perceive that it is now becoming our duty to dare to think for ourselves? But I forget: perhaps you cannot love me. Is that so? Perhaps you already have also learned to love? Oh, do not say so!"

Was he so carried away by the impetuosity and vehemence of this maiden that during this strange interview no thought of Edith Allyn crossed his mind? Who shall say how this may have been? Perhaps he already had brought himself to believe that Edith was betrothed to another.

"No, Lady Blanche," he said, "I am in that respect quite free. But moved as I am by your words, I must still express my sense of the wide distance that separates you and me. Who that sees you can refrain from admiring your beauty? Who, in my place, could hope to do more than humbly wor-

ship so lovely a creature? It is not right that you should ever again address me in terms of entreaty; and here, on my knees, I proffer you, through good and evil report, the devotion of a life. Believe me, I will love and reverence you as I would my angel guardian; and should fortune be propitious, I may yet be able to claim you as my bride."

As he knelt before her in the shadow of the old tower, Blanche Meadows seemed well pleased that she had stooped to conquer. Her eyes filled with tears, and Hugh, rising, pressed her to his bosom and kissed the drops away.

"Let it be as you will, dear lady," he said. "I accept this priceless gift as coming directly from God. You are mine for ever, despite all difference of rank and wealth. The treasure you offer me I will not refuse; and so God deal with me in all things as I prove worthy of your love. This red rose that I take from your bosom is the gage of your trust in me, and this kiss on those ruby lips shall be the pledge of my life's love."

"The spirit-kiss you received last night,—was that, too, a pledge of something as enduring?" she asked, smiling with a new happiness, the happiness of a first love returned.

"I think it was the proof of a love for which I was all unworthy," said Desmond; "of a love that I will live to justify."

"Hugh," said Blanche, "for the time we must part; but we shall meet at the chapel this evening. Yesterday you saved my life; to-day you have given me your own. Kiss me once again, dearest; for henceforth these two lives are to be one."

And so they parted. Crossing the hill, Desmond made his way on to the high road. As he drew near the lodge, a carriage emerged from the gate, and Hugh saw that one of the occupants was the Lady Margaret Constable. She had sooner saw the choir-master than she ordered the coachman to stop, and beckoning to our hero she began with much stateliness to thank him for his service of the preceding day.

"Lord Guisborough," she said, "kindly undertook to convey to you the expression of my sincere gratitude, and I hope you will now allow me to say how much I admire your coolness and bravery. Both Lady Blanche and myself were terrified,—I am sure I was,—yesterday to thank you as you deserved. Indeed, my nerves are so shaken that I am almost

afraid to ride to the railway station, but these horses are very nice, quiet animals, and the roads are good and safe. It is really so terrible to think that my last day at Holmwood was so nearly the last of my existence. God bless you, sir! you will always have my prayers."

As the carriage rolled away towards the railway, Hugh, who wanted very much to be alone with his own thoughts, proceeded up the avenue toward the Hall. In their common sitting-room he found Mr. and Mrs. Flowers.

"I am glad you have come, Mr. Desmond," said the old lady, "as Mr. Flowers is just now shocking bad company. He insists that he has seen a ghost; and you know how stubbornly he adheres to an opinion, no matter how absurd it may be."

"A ghost, indeed, Mrs. Flowers," answered Hugh, "and at midday too. I thought such visitors never appeared after 't' glow-worm sho the matin to be near.'"

"Nay, my young friend," said the schoolmaster, "I have never rated demonology, witchcraft and stories of apparitions beyond the estimate which reason urges us to put on them. Of course, I say this mindful of our ignorance with respect to what Almighty God may, in his wisdom, allow in certain cases. To doubt or deny that disembodied spirits have made themselves visible on certain extraordinary occasions, would be a grievous sin. But I am convinced that I have seen something not of earth,—not at midday, but almost at midnight."

"Now, Mr. Desmond," said Mrs. Flowers, "you will have the whole story. As I have already heard it, and do not think it so interesting as to hear repetition quite so early, I think I will go and dress for dinner,"—and the good old lady left the room.

"Mrs. Flowers does not think the ghost had a message for her, evidently," said Desmond; "but come, my dear sir, tell me what it is, or was, you have seen. Was it really a sheeted ghost?"

"Last night," said the old man, "my cough kept me awake and annoyed my wife very much. Finding I had left the lozenges, which you remember Appleton advised me to take, behind me on retiring,—which was in some measure your fault, as I am sure Father Nevins' story of the affair at the bridge interested us all so much,—I threw my dressing-gown about me and went down the corridor. I found the little box on this very table, and made my way back to my room. Just

before I came to the door of your apartment, something guided, rather than walked, noiselessly by me. Oh, there was no illusion,—nothing of the kind, I assure you. You know the story of the Lady Alicia, eh? of the dark-eyed picture in the gallery?"

"You mean of the lady who is said to have loved the Puritan?" asked Hugh.

"The same; her portrait is, I think, the most noticeable in the gallery. You read novels; what is it Dickens says of all the pictures of all the Dedlocks?"

"That they all looked stupid, I think," replied Hugh, "but surely this Lady Alicia does not look like that?"

"No, indeed, just the reverse; but to my mind she looks precisely like our Lady Blanche, of course making allowances for costumes and all that. Well, she was found dead in the Phoenix Tower soon after Marston Moor, where her Roundhead lover was killed. Mr. Desmond, I saw that woman's spirit last night. As it passed me, the face was partly hidden, but it was the Lady Alicia. Of that I am convinced."

"Tut, tut, my good friend! you must have dreamed all this. But whether you did or not, pray keep the story to yourself: it would never do to start a story of a haunted house now, just before the shooting season."

"Of course, of course, I will be careful; indeed, had not Mrs. Flowers been so sceptical, I should never have mentioned it to you. But it was no dream, I assure you."

On the following Monday Hugh Desmond began his examination of the Christian evidences. As usual with him, he devoted himself to these studies with great ardour. Mr. Champernowne, desiring to begin at the very foundation, had supplied him with works whose object was to prove the existence of God, and to demonstrate that such a Being must necessarily possess certain attributes. This narrative is not a polemical treatise, so the reader need not fear that he will be led inadvertently into the mazes of controversy, but we may freely state that we have proof positive to show that the books he read at this period suggested doubts which otherwise might not have arisen in Desmond's mind. Many of the assertors of the absolute necessity of Natural Religion began by asserting that the primary cause of atheistical thinking was the depravity of the human nature, following in this respect Augustine of Hippo, who states that "no man denies the existence of God,

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but he to whose interest it makes that there should be no God." The more he reflected on this proposition, the more difficult it became for the young man to accept it. Although his inquiries were being conducted on the strange principle of swallowing the medicine almost before he felt the disease, he was sharp-sighted enough to discover that the impugners and repudiators of the doctrine of a personal Deity were not men of warm passions, not selfish sensualists, but rather persons whose lives would merit the approval of any superior Being one of whose attributes was perfect goodness.

Father Nevins happening one evening to find Hugh poring over Butler's "Analogy," thought it his duty to remonstrate.

"Mr. Desmond," he said, "if you will take my advice, you will abstain from reading such books. I am convinced that they injure rather than benefit. After all, religion is more a thing of the heart than of the head, and when we begin the attempt to square all mysteries with reason, our faith then begins to wax cold. It is enough for the true Catholic to possess the assurance that the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, is a full and sufficient guide to all truth, and if we follow her decrees, it will be impossible for error to assail us. Only the fool says in his heart, 'There is no God,' because his mind prompts him to desire that there were not one. Read the decree of the fifth session of the Council of Trent on Original Sin, and you will find there the justification of the Divine method, which *si quis non confitetur, anathema sit*."

Desmond, however, regarded his studies in the light of a theodicy, a vindication of the way of God to man, and he could not rest content until his own sense of justice was reconciled to that way as being based on the very highest, the supreme righteousness. In short, dear reader, he was troubled over the perplexing theme of the existence of evil, a question upon which not all the Councils that have been convened since "the apostles and elders came together," under the presidency of James, at Jerusalem have ever been able to throw a gleam of light. It was impossible for him to conceal the workings of his mind from Blanche. How frequently they met we need not here inquire. Sometimes under the twinkling stars, either in the old tower or nearer home, almost under the shadow of

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\* "If any one confesses not, let him be accursed."

the proud home of her ancestors, Blanche Meadows held sweet converse with the man of her choice. At first Hugh dared not even allude to the subjects over which his mind was so exercised, but when at last he did so, he found, very much to his surprise, that Blanche was no stranger to such thoughts. In the society to which she was accustomed, it was impossible to remain ignorant of the great mental conflict of the age; and it was from the lips of the lovely being whom he had learned to love so dearly that even the memory of Edith was obscured that the mariner's son really learned to call in question the truth of the pretentious revelation which had imposed shackles upon his intellect almost before he had acquired the power of continuous reflection. It may be that the peculiarity of their position in some measure inspired their researches. At any rate, it is certain that these venturesome young persons began to read,—somewhat secretly, it must be acknowledged,—certain perilous books and pamphlets to which neither pope nor bishop would have accorded his *imprimatur*. Reader, I wist not whether thou mayst consider such studies prompted by the Devil, but well I wot that thou wouldest not object to compare notes with such a participator in thy investigations. Doubtless the choir-master felt on these occasions the delights alluded to by the gallant Lovelace. If love can even transform a prison cell into an abiding place of Liberty, what can it not effect in enlightening the mind when two lovers mutually aid each other in arriving at truth?

“When Love, with unconfined wings,  
Hovers within my gates,  
And my divine Althea brings  
To whisper at my grates;  
When I lie tangled in her hair,  
And fettered in her eye,  
The birds that wanton in the air  
Know no such liberty.”

Nevertheless, as too much liberty would be fatal to pedagogy, I do not recommend this method of acquiring knowledge to the tutors and professors in public schools.

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## CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH A RISE IN LIFE LEADS TO A FALL FROM GRACE.

GLoucester Street, Clerkenwell, is—or was, for the march of improvement may have swept it away ere this,—sacred to lodgings. In the first-floor window of almost every house hung a small placard bearing the legend “Rooms to Let,” varied now and again by the superior announcement “Apartments.” The inhabitants were mostly of the more respectable class of London artizans, whose somewhat precarious incomes were supplemented by the weekly rents of the tenants of such spare rooms as the houses possessed. Being within easy reach of the Strand and Fleet Street, it was really quite a convenient place for a printer to live in, which was precisely what William Curtin thought this evening as he pulled the bell which communicated with the third floor of a house in Gloucester Street. The door was opened by a pale, patient-looking little woman, who greeted William with a kiss.

“Well, dear,” said the little woman, as the two ascended the stairs, “how have you been to-day?” The inquiry was made in an anxious tone, for the little woman’s husband suffered from a chronic affection of the heart, albeit he was tall, stout, and hale in outward appearance.

“Pretty well, Mary,” answered her husband, “we have had a quiet day, and I have been on my stool nearly all the time. Still, I am glad to be home, all the same.”

Curtin was a compositor, employed in the office of *The Catholic Herald*, a weekly paper devoted to the maintenance of the cause and interests of the Roman Church in Great Britain. His malady, however, sometimes rendered it impossible for him to work at “the case,” and, of course, he found greater consideration extended toward him by his co-religionists than he would have had elsewhere among strangers. Moreover, the editor and manager of the *Herald* were of Irish extraction, and the fact that William was Irish by birth and a fervent Catholic made his position much more agreeable than it might otherwise have been. He was nearly thirty years old, and had been married about six years, his wife being also Irish, although her parents had come to London when she was almost a baby. Being a skilful needlewoman, and childless,

she was able in the busy season to earn much more than her husband could do, she and her husband's sister being in the mantle department of a large and well-known establishment in St. Paul's Churchyard.

Upon entering the cosy, well-kept parlour, Curtin threw himself upon the lounge.

"Mary," he said, "come here, darling: listen."

The little woman approached her husband, and bending slightly over him, listened intently to the beating of his heart. It was to her a terrible auscultation, for even at a distance of two or three feet from the broad chest of this stalwart man the sound of that ominous palpitation could be distinctly heard. Who shall venture to describe the look of agonized love, of tender pity and commiseration that came over the averted face? Withal, it was blended with an expression of resignation like that ascribed by painters to the Dolorous Mother. During more than four years Mary Curtin had wrestled with this sorrow, struggling hard to bring herself to regard it as a manifestation of Divine love. She had brought herself to this degree of submission, but who that knows the depth of a woman's love can doubt or question the awfulness of her ordeal?

"I try always," said her husband, "to look upon this as a blessing,"—here the poor fellow crossed himself devoutly,—"*O Holy Virgin, example of patience! by the most painful carrying of the cross on which thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, bore the heavy weight of our sins, obtain for us of him, by thy intercession, courage and strength to follow his steps, and bear our cross after him to the end of our lives. Amen.*"

For a few moments both were silent, while doubtless the woman's prayer, though not uttered aloud, was no less fervent than that of her husband. Once more she kissed him, smoothed the hair from his forehead, and then proceeded to prepare the evening meal. In a short time they were joined by William's sister, Nellie, a rosy-cheeked young woman in the pride of health, and evidently conscious of her buxom comeliness.

"Mr. Tainter,—Joseph, the manager,—told me to-day," said William, as he stirred his tea, "that Walter, the reporter for the Catholic papers, is looking around for an assistant. 'Mr. Curtin,' said he, 'you are a good stenographer, aren't you?' I said yes, I was able to follow an ordinary speaker

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or that I was when at home in Waterford. By the same token, I said, Mr. Taintor, the very best speech I reported was no speech at all, for, begorra, the speaker, who was a Liberal candidate for Parliament, was hustled off the platform. I remember he was an Englishman, and sure it was himself was the scared man that day. Bacon, our foreman, thought, maybe, I was making out that the English were cowards, for he asked how I knew that the candidate was scared. Faith, said I, by his running : he went through the boys like a hare ; and they found him that night up to his neck in water in the hotel cistern."

"Did Mr. Taintor advise you to try for the place, William?" asked his wife.

"Yes, my dear, and to-morrow I am to have a letter of introduction from his brother the editor. Joseph tells me I can make three pounds a week or thereabout only by reporting the sermons at the pro-cathedral and one or two meetings a week, with the chance of an extra paragraph now and then in the dailies."

"And would the work be easier for you than what you are now doing, William?" asked his wife with some anxiety. "I thought, maybe, he would find it too exciting," she said in reply to a look from Nellie.

"Ah, sure!" said Nellie, "the work would be much better for William than sitting or standing up in a close room from morning till night. Besides, see how much more respectable it is."

Mrs. Curtin's only sister had "married well," her husband being the head-master of a large parochial Catholic school, somewhere down in Stepney, near the East India Dock. It was evident that Nellie, whose foible was vanity and love of show, envied this lady, and she readily discerned that to have her brother a reporter would be to considerably lessen the great gulf that yawned between a mere compositor and a well-salaried schoolmaster.

"True for you, Nellie," answered William ; "it would be, as you say, much more respectable, and I should be in some sort a literary man. Yes, Mary, dear, I should like it better, much better, and with the blessing of God I will try for the place to-morrow."

"And I," said Nellie, "have the promise of something that will help us to tide over these slack summer months. Maggie

Langley is doing sewing for one of those fashionable dress-makers,—what d'ye call 'em? modests,—and I am told that if I go with good references, I can be provided with work here in the house."

Brother and sister were both favoured by fortune. His excellent recommendations,—for William was well known to the Catholic clergy of Saffron Hill and Hatton Garden,—and the ready demonstration of his ability as a writer of shorthand would have procured the place for him, but in addition to these he was also familiar with the style in which the various Catholic newspapers printed the sermons. Mr. Walter was an elderly man,—a convert,—who had for years done all this reporting, but when the number of Roman Catholic churches and of papers began to increase he also began to realize that one man alone could not continue the business satisfactorily. Large as London was, however, and numerous as were the professors and practisers of the noble art of stenography, Mr. Walters had advertised three or four weeks in vain for an assistant. Among other requirements, it was essential that the reporter should be, not only a Roman Catholic, but somewhat acquainted with what may be termed the inner life of Romanism in England. In William Curtin he discovered the man he sought. Unfeignedly pious and devout, strictly conforming to the general rules of the Church, and obedient to her precepts, William and his wife were model Catholics. Every action of their lives, from the morning ejaculation of praise to the prayer with which at night they commended their souls to God, was performed as though it were a spiritual exercise executed in the immediate presence of angel witnesses and recorders. Among women,—at any rate in the Latin and Eastern communions,—such fervour is too common to be especially noteworthy; but among men, however steadfast their faith may be, religious devotion seldom becomes so all-absorbing. The nature of his malady, his recognition of the truth that, figuratively speaking, he stood daily and hourly in the presence of Death, unquestionably actuated William, and impelled him to ceaseless vigilance and preparedness; but the tension of a mind always bent on self-examination and circumspection against even an errant thought must have been tremendous.

In his new vocation Curtin did well. Ordinarily, he had merely to reproduce the salient features of a sermon, except

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when the Archbishop, who, with comparatively mediocre abilities, had acquired a world-wide repute and celebrity dear to his ambitious spirit, occupied the pulpit. Then, indeed, every sentence had to be looked after, as though each word had been a brilliant from Goleonda or an Orloff diamond that the world would not willingly lose. On these occasions the man of the stylus had to be on the alert. Every word had to go into the note-book and to be transferred on the morrow to the "flimsy" although, sooth to say, even Catholic editors were wont at times,—moved thereunto either by considerations of space or audaciously estimating their readers' patience by their own,—considerably to abbreviate the discourses even of so eminent a dignitary and hierarch-in-chief.

A man of higher attainments or greater culture might have failed where William Curtain succeeded. Like the majority of his fellow-countrymen, he was easily impressed by, and always ready to acknowledge the claims and pretensions of, rank and wealth; and when, as often happened, he was brought into contact with persons of higher place, or of elevated dignity in the Church, his demeanour was quiet and deferential where that of an Englishman of the working classes would have been churlish and sullen. Centuries of oppression have at least to this extent modified the character of the sons of *cruenta Hybernia*,† that where their obedience is willingly rendered they generally wear their chains gracefully, while they are, if involuntarily subjected, as inflexible and obdurate as adamant.

Whether as opined by Nellie, the world,—whose notions and estimates are often so pitiful as almost to warrant the verdict of that philosopher who affirmed that men are a contemptible race,—really did consider that a reporter was a more respectable being than a "compositor" we cannot determine, but William now found himself able to enter, where before he was not free to intrude. For example, Taintor, the manager of the *Herald*, introduced him at his club,—the "Bohemians" of Crown Court, Fleet Street, of which exceedingly free and

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\*Here it becomes the chronicler's duty to inform the reader, whose patience hath carried him thus far, that "flimsy" is a slang term for the oiled paper upon which reports are duplicated and multiplied. Likewise, it signifieth a note of the Bank of England,—and also of the Bank of Elegance.

† "Bloody," or "blood-stained Ireland,"—the designation used by the Emperor Frederick II. in his gallant appeal to England, France and Germany to oppose the advance of the Mogul Tartars.

easy society he became a member or an associate. On the evening of his introduction he found himself cordially welcomed by four or five law clerks, two medical students, three wood engravers, the artist who illustrated the Catholic magazine, and a weak-eyed, diminutive young genius celebrated in literature as being the author of a thrilling series of highwaymen's adventures, the gem of the whole list being "Three String Jack,"—a title which may possibly have had some association with the tragic mode of the chivalrous hero's exit from society and the world. Among the Bohemians this imaginative gentleman was ycleped Thackeray Junior, and it seemed that he did not object to a sobriquet which placed him among the lesser gods, while no Senior appeared to protest against the apotheosis.

Under the presidency of Joseph Taintor the Bohemians showed themselves to be of a hospitable, convivial nature. Jokes, songs, and anecdotes abounded, and Thackeray Junior welcomed the neophyte in a speech which evoked ringing applause, followed of course by "glasses round, gentlemen," by order of the chair. And so they kept it up until host Ruby, —whose appearance fully justified his patronymic,—came to announce that the hour had arrived when, in accordance with a Parliamentary edict framed by legislators who regarded all good Bohemians with bitter envy, it devolved upon him to shut the portals of the "Crown." Here it was that one of the medical students covered himself with undying glory. Grasping mine host by the hand, he insisted that he should allow his health to be drunk in a bumper at his, the student's, expense, the landlord to concoct the beverage and to share in the potation. Against such resolution as that displayed by the medical student opposition would have availed about as much as the determination of a mob of unarmed, half-starved Socialists to withstand the Horse Guards. The thing had to be done, and done it accordingly was, while the Bohemians sang in chorus—

" For he's a jolly good fellow ;  
For he's a jolly good fellow ;  
For he's a jolly good fellow ;—  
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hurrah ! "

When he reached the outer air it seemed to William Curtin that Fleet Street was enveloped in a very peculiar fog, through which the lamp-posts seemed to be multiplied indefinitely, and

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by which his articulation was strangely affected. His friend Taintor and Thackeray Junior insisted on accompanying him to the corner of Gloucester Street, where they parted from him with various expressions of brotherhood, indicative of the strong spirit of fraternity by which all true Bohemians were animated.

Never before had Mary Curtin seen her husband so much under the influence of liquor. Seated in his own parlour the whole aspect of the man was altered. A letter lay on the table, and William, with unsteady hand, tore open the envelope.

"See here," he cried, "this is how they order me about, as if I were a dog. By Heaven! I am a mean, miserable cur to be at their beck and call every day and every hour! I tell you, Mary, and you, Nellie, that there is no reason why you should have to toil like slaves for the coins that they give. Why cannot you ride in your carriage like they do? Why must I fawn and crouch and lick the dust before these people?"

"Hush, William darling! it is the will of God," said his wife, soothingly; "and surely, dear, we have much to be thankful for."

"The will of God?" he replied; "aye, they tell us so; but why, Mary, why? Ah, tell me why. Was it the will of God that my father's cruelty drove me away from Waterford to Bristol? was it the will of God that I and another should have to tramp to London with but a few pence in our pockets? was it the will of God, think you, that hunger,—hunger, woman!—drove us to take three or four turnips from a field by the roadside, and that the owner,—some *shoneen* of a squire, curses on his head this night!—should come along in his carriage while we boys sat under the hedge eating them? Arrah! curses, I say, on his head this night! he got out of the coach and made us fall on our knees before him and beg his pardon; and we did it, we did it, Mary, to keep outside the prison walls! Yes, woman, we, poor starving devils, did it, when if we had the souls of men we would have dashed his old brains on the ground. Oh, the will of God, is it? Damn them, I say! damn them all for a heartless crew of hellish tyrants and oppressors!"—and he ground his teeth in his rage.

It was some time ere they could induce him to go to bed. When at length he retired, and after Nellie also had sought her room, Mary Curtin fell on her knees and said her Rosary, praying long and fervently for her beloved husband. When,

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her devotions ended, her mind grew calmer, she took up the letter which William had crumpled and thrown scornfully to the ground. It was a request from Mr. Walter that on the ensuing Wednesday he, Curtin, should proceed to Holmwood Hall in Rutlandshire, to report the proceedings of a meeting convened to promote the formation of a league designed to aid in recovering the rights of the Holy Father and the Church in Italy.

The following morning found the reporter very "wells" and very penitent. Fortunately he belonged to a Church which makes it easy for the sinner to white-wash his soul, no matter how weighty the sin. Besides the terrible headache under which he suffered, Curtin turned with loathing from the sight of food, so that, as may easily be surmised, his repentance was quickened and encouraged by the physical wretchedness resulting from the excessive good-nature of the Bohemians. Consequently, his "act of contrition" was fervid enough, and during the morning he made his way to the Italian Church, Hatton Garden, where, casting himself before a ghastly image of Christ being prepared for the sepulchre, he earnestly prayed for mercy.

Nevertheless, dear reader, I sometimes fancy there was more of the true natural man in the intoxicated Bohemian of the preceding night, than there was in the affrighted devotee groaning in spirit before yonder figure of a man blood-dabbled and done to death by cruel hands.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### WHEREIN LORDS AND LADIES HELP A FISHERMAN.

ONE of the most highly gifted Englishmen of the nineteenth century, after mentally surveying the whole stream of the world's history, says :—

"But what was before us we know not.  
And we know not what shall succeed."†

We do, however, know enough of man's history in the past to compel us to turn with shuddering horror from the contem-

† Matthew Arnold, "The River of Time"

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plation of the crimes and inhumanities of Superstition, of that fanaticism which has urged men to "offer heads to Hades, and to his father a mortal,"\* to perpetrate atrocities the bare mention of which almost disorders the well-balanced mind to the point of regretting that all the priesthoods of the world,—the disembowellers of pregnant women and infants, the entrail scanners, whose hands were laved in human blood, and whose hearts were dead to mercy,—could not have been served as the Proconsul Tiberius treated the demon priests of the Carthaginian Saturn.† To be sure, the world has moved somewhat since such deeds were possible, and although, as Mr. Arnold bids us remember, we do not know what may occur or recur in future cycles, we may venture to indulge the hope that the coming era will, as the wise Spinoza vainly wished might occur in his own time, be liberated from all superstition. Who shall say, however, that this will be so who reflects upon the astounding exhibition, made so very recently, of a student of Nature proclaiming before the world that he willingly accepts the authority of an infallible Church and its head, while allowing human reason to call in question and overthrow the authority of the books upon whose historical accuracy and trustworthiness depend the reality and *motif* of the revelation upon whose essential truth the existence of that Church and its claims are based?‡

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\* "Kai kephalas Haide kai to patri pempete phota," was the command of the oracle to the original tribes of Italy. "Macrob." Sat. i. 7.

† The Carthaginian human sacrifices were continued long after the overthrow of the Carthaginian power. We learn from Tertullian that, in the second Christian century, the Proconsul commanded the sacrificing priests of Saturn to be crucified near their altars. See, also, Motley's "Revolt of the Netherlands" for other examples of a priestcraft no less fiendish. For many centuries the Roman Church was the mother of hate and cruelty.

‡ The "two-fold truth" system of the Middle Ages did not involve so painful a degree of inconsistency, or imply such dishonesty. Mr. Justice Stephen says of Mr. Mivart's contention: "We have here, then, a plain statement that if the question, whether the Gospel history of Jesus Christ is true or not, is to be decided by the ordinary canons of history and evidence, it appears to Mr. Mivart incredible, in so far as it is miraculous, for no one will assert that the historical and critical evidence for the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the raising of Lazarus, or the cure of the man born blind, is stronger than the evidence of the Resurrection. The necessary result is, that Mr. Mivart thinks that the New Testament, as it stands, is unhistorical and untrustworthy, although the doctrines supposed to be recorded in it are shown to be true by other means." "Nineteenth Century," January, 1888, p. 117.

"His whole theory is thus nothing more or less than a 'petitio principii' disguised. I believe the Church to be infallible because the infallible Church says it is infallible." To this I would merely add my conviction, that the great Anglo-Saxon race will never degenerate so far as to make Liguorian casuistry its standard of ethics, or to support any form of religion by the practice of self-mendacity.

Yes, the world has moved since the days when human sacrifices were offered in every grove. Not to Moloch or to Saturn do we now suffer our children to pass through the devouring fires, and although Mammon exacts his victims daily and hourly, we cunningly disguise our immolations under the veils of political economy and the alleged necessities of our wonderful Industrial System. Despotie princes do not now secrete huge hoards of gems and gold in strongly-fortified caverns and crypts of Golconda; all our capital is invested forsooth, flowing hither and thither, doubling and returning back on itself with increased volume, like an auriferous Mississippi, blessing those whom Providence has placed near the stream, while those whose lot is cast on the more distant, arid desert must necessarily acquiesce in the dispensation, even though they perish from thirst. Clearly, no man or society can be blamed because the Nile does not run through the Sahara, while the fate of Prometheus might to act as a warning to the impious mortal who would tempt us to turn the desert into a water-way, and thus contravene the decrees and purposes of God.

Especially has the world moved during the last century, and so rapid has been the process of change of place that various old institutions have been seriously disturbed thereby. Among these, the Church built upon the Rock has undergone a premonitory earthquake, indicative, it may be, of the great seismic disturbance which will betide when the foremost race of man become convinced that only a saxifragian shock can remove the world-poisoning malaria which, according to Cardinal Newman, floats around the base of "the Rock of St. Peter." There can be little reason for doubting that the majority of the ladies and gentlemen gathered at Holmwood Hall to devise ways and means for establishing a league in defence of the rights of Christ's Vicar upon earth, disliked and distrusted the velocity with which the world had so recently been moving. Besides depriving St. Peter of his patrimony, —to which he was clearly entitled, no matter whether Isidore brought the Donation of Constantine from the region sacred to the Father of Lies, or Astolfo from the moon,\*—the impious Romans, true to the character ascribed to them by Bernard

\* Vide "Orlando Furioso," xxxiv. 80: "Di vari fiore ad un grand monte passa," etc.

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of Clairvaux,\* had dared to cast in their lot with united Italy, preferring Victor Emanuel and liberty to Pius IX. and the bonds of Christ. Of course, the clergy disliked it all the more, and they showed their dissatisfaction very plainly.

What guarantee was there,—if such disloyalty proved contagious among Catholic people,—that the clergy would not suffer in their dearest interests? that in their blind demoniac fury, the mob of France, Italy and Spain would not imitate the cruelty practised upon the Chapter of Seez by Geoffrey of Normandy? a cruelty, as Gibbon observes, of whose "pain and danger they might justly complain," even although, "since they had vowed chastity, he deprived them of a superfluous treasure."† At the meeting, convened in what was known as the Long Room, the Earl of Guisborough proposed that the chair should be taken by the Duke of Norwich, whom he termed "the premier noble of this ancient monarchy," and who was a weak-looking young man, in no respect resembling his ancestor, the "drinking Duke" by whom poor Sir Timothy Shelley was protected from the world. However aristocratic the blood of the assembled lords and ladies was, much of it was assuredly not English, there being counts and countesses by the dozen, bearing such names as Zamoyski, Zulueta, Torre Diaz, and looking,—at least the male portion of them,—very much like restaurant waiters in mufti. A dais or low platform had been prepared for the speakers, and there were three or four reporters at a side table, among them being a special representative of the Catholic press of the metropolis.

Of course, in all the arrangements, due care had been taken to preserve the distinctions and gradations of rank. There was a certain space set apart for the patricians, the outer circles being allotted to the inferior quality, among whom were Mrs. Kendall, Alice and Mary, her daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Flowers, Hugh Desmond, and various other Roman Catholics of the district.

Just as the noble Chairman was assuming his seat of office, the Countess of Guisborough, accompanied by her daughter, entered the room. Being a confirmed invalid, and suffering

\* "A nation nursed in sedition, cruel, intractable, and scorning to obey unless they are too feeble to resist,"—and much more saintly Billingsgate.

† "When Geoffrey was master of Normandy, the Chapter of Seez presumed, without his consent, to proceed to the election of a Bishop: upon which he ordered all of them to be — and made all their — be brought him in a platter." Hume's Hist. of Eng., Henry II. (A.D. 1162), ch. viii. note.

from a diseased hip-joint, the Countess seldom appeared in public. The present occasion, however, appealed strongly to her sympathies, and, indeed, it was mainly in deference to her wishes that the meeting had been convened at Holmwood rather than in London. Lady Blanche followed her mother's chair,—which was propelled by a servant, whose sole duty it was to perform this office,—and as the party moved past the outer circle of chairs, all their occupants rose to bow their respects to the noble lady whose kindness of heart, no less than her sufferings, endeared her to all around. In response to the choir-master's salute, Lady Blanche's bow was so markedly distinct that Alice Kendall, who sat next to Hugh, involuntarily turned toward him. Leaning over, she whispered:

"Did you see Lady Blanche's look? You seem to be almost a favourite since her ladyship has taken my place at the choir-practice. She never fails to attend either."

"Hush," said Desmond, "his Grace is speaking."

His Grace was, at any rate, trying hard to speak; but, although he was the first noble of the kingdom, it was painfully evident that he could lay no claim to the title of its first orator. His lisp might possibly have been cured by a course of treatment similar to that employed by Demosthenes, but at present it was somewhat difficult to understand what he was trying to say. He read a letter from the great metropolitan hierophant, and then proceeded to explain why the meeting had been called. In alluding to the cruel persecution of the "Holy Father," he declared that the Catholics of England and of Scotland were resolved to protest against the injustice, whereupon a voice, suspiciously like that of Hugh Desmond, was heard to cry, "And of Ireland also."

"Of courth, of courth," said the noble Duke, "and of Irela, too, of courth,"—which observation was uttered so lightly that one might almost have concluded that, in point of numbers and influence, the Catholics of the lesser island counted for very little, as indeed they do in the opinion of the aristocratic Catholics of England. Finally, his Grace expressed his conviction that the Pope and the Church would obtain a speedy triumph over the "Revolution;" and he sat down amid as much applause as could be rationally looked for from so patrician a gathering.

Other speakers took the floor, and a programme was ulti-

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mately adopted tending toward the formation of an organization which might, or might not, shake the whole Italian peninsula from Como to Otranto, or transform Sicily from Palermo to Cape Passaro. Two of the reporters took their departure as soon as the meeting was over, having to catch the Liverpool train at Loughborough; another, it seemed, was employed by Lord Howard of Glossop; while the other would necessarily be compelled to remain at the Guisborough Arms that night, it being already too late for him to reach the station in time for the up-train to London.

"Mr. Flowers," said Father Nevins, approaching the group by the entrance of the Long Room, "allow me to introduce Mr. Curtin, our reporter from town. He is a co-labourer with Walters, whom we both know, and as we desire to have as complete a report as possible for our own papers, Mr. Curtin and I will compare notes this evening in the library. Meanwhile, may I recommend him to your hospitality?"

"We shall be only too pleased to have him with us," answered the schoolmaster; "pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Curtin; allow me to introduce you to what I call my family party."

However strange it may seem, William Curtin was the first native-born Irishman with whom Desmond had ever been brought into contact. Consequently, both before and during tea, he observed him with some interest, of course taking care to avoid any mark of extreme curiosity. He was particularly impressed with certain signs, as he considered them, of timorousness, and perhaps it may be regarded as demonstrating the effect resulting from Desmond's latest studies, that he mentally concluded that Curtin was the most superstitious man he had hitherto encountered. Mrs. Flowers having smilingly alluded to Hugh as the rescuer of distressed damsels, the garrulous schoolmaster proceeded to narrate the story of the adventure at the bridge.

"One never knows," remarked the reporter, "how soon the call may come. In Ireland nearly all the faithful wear the little scapular, which protects the wearer from sudden, unprovided danger of death."

"Do you really mean, sir," asked Desmond, "that they believe in the efficacy of the Carmelite Scapular to such a degree?" Curtin looked at his questioner with some surprise.

"Believe in it, sir," he said, "of course they do. I have

worn one for the last four years,"—and inserting two fingers under his collar, he contrived to bring into view a string or ribbon of common tape. "There," he continued, "the Blessed Virgin herself gave the scapular to St. Simon Stock, and it is a sure preservative against loss of life by drowning."

"Indeed," said Hugh, "do you know it seems to me that this particular virtue would be best exemplified in conjunction with a life-belt."

The sarcasm was clearly lost upon Curtin,—possibly because he could not anticipate it from such a quarter,—but Mr. Flowers felt constrained to say something.

"Perhaps," he said, "it does appear rather foreign to our English manners, but they do relate wonderful things of that little scapular."

"So it appears, certainly," remarked Hugh dryly; "but pray, Mr. Curtin, what other virtues does it possess?"

"Indeed, sir," replied the reporter, "I am afraid I do not know them all. It gives us certain safety from Hell if we die with it about our necks, unless in case of wilful, obstinate unbelief or rebellion; and sure, our Blessed Lady herself promised one of the Popes that she would go down to Purgatory every Saturday, and if she could find there any one who had worn this scapular, she would carry him away with her straight and safe to Heaven."\*

"It strikes me that this ought to effect a great saving in masses," said Desmond, "and only think how rapidly Purgatory would be emptied if every Catholic could only be induced to wear a scapular."

"Yes, sir," assented Curtin, still deaf to the sarcasm, "but sometimes I think that if Our Lady opened the gates of Heaven some of us would prefer to remain outside. There is the Cord of St. Francis, with its thousands of years of indulgencies, and yet we do not accept this means of obtaining the merits of the blessed saints because we hate to undertake the obligation of the prayers."

"May I ask if you also wear this wonderful cord, Mr. Curtin?" inquired Hugh.

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\* Reader, if thou art a Roman Catholic, thou art of course aware that the reporter spoke the truth. The Virgin said to the Pope, "Ego, Mater gratiose, descendam sabbato post eorum obitum, et quos in purgatorio invenero liberabo, et ad montem sanctum vitæ æternæ perducam."—Guglielmi, "Recueil des Scapulaires."

"No, sir, I do not," answered the reporter, "but I ought to, I know."

"Mr. Curtin," said Hugh, as they left the tea-table, "I would like to hear your views on the subject of Fetichism."

"Of what, sir?" asked the other, in blissful ignorance of the drift of the question, as he was also of the meaning of the word itself.

"I beg your pardon," said Desmond, "I see you are acquainted with the thing although you do not recognize its name. But, of course, you know what Fakirism is."

"No, sir, I do not think I do, or else I do not remember it," he replied.

"It is," interposed the old schoolmaster, who evidently disliked Hugh's tone, "an element in Hindooism by which the heathen and their priests are impelled to make what is terrible in their religion predominate over what is milder."

"In short, Mr. Curtin," said Hugh, "it is a form of superstition whose motive power is grounded upon fear, and whose votaries seek to conciliate their Deity by practising and inflicting the most hideous tortures on their own bodies."

"Oh, yes, to be sure, Mr. Desmond; I have heard of it, of course," replied the reporter. "But in God's good time the true religion will penetrate those dark places of the earth, and such abominations will come to an end."

"Unless,—which is not impossible,—kindred ones develop nearer home," said Hugh, with a keen glance toward Flowers, who was looking fidgetty and somewhat troubled.

"Mr. Desmond," said the old man, in a low voice, "you do not appear familiar with what I may term the Italian form of devotion. It has grown up into what I may almost call a fashion, but it is not, I venture to think, altogether satisfactory to our English minds."

"Pardon me, my dear old friend," answered Hugh, "but I have lately, very lately, read Liguori's *Glories of Mary*, and the book shocked me beyond measure. Then there is the cultus of the Sacred Heart;—as you say, it is all very un-English and even worse; but as I see you do not like the subject, let us change it, if you please. Well, Mr. Curtin, what did you think of the meeting, eh?"

The reporter was evidently deeply impressed by the condescension of the great ones of the land, and by their earnest devotion to the Pope. He expressed great admiration of the

speech of the Earl of Ruthen, who had, in the name of Christ and the Church, hurled defiance in the teeth of the secret societies which were vainly endeavouring to undermine and subvert the whole of Christendom, and whose tools were the impious statesmen and politicians of Italy and the German Chancellor, Prince Bismarck.

"His lordship," he said, "is a fine specimen of what a nobleman should be. He is a Catholic to the core."

"I think he is," replied Hugh, "a most thorough Catholic. Do you not know that he is reputed to have publicly declared that he was a Catholic first and an Englishman afterward?"

"A most injudicious remark, if it were really uttered," observed Mr. Flowers, "and one which directly puts weapons into the hands of the Church's enemies and confirms their prejudices. I will not believe that the time will ever arrive, or the contingency arise, when our duty to the faith and our patriotism will be opposed the one to the other. But here, I think, comes a request for Mr. Curtin to go down to the library. Good bye! Mr. Curtin; I shall not see you again before you leave, I suppose, so I wish you a pleasant journey back to town."

"Good bye, and God bless you!" said the reporter. "You spoke of being in London soon, Mr. Desmond. I hope you will be so good as to look me up either at the *Herald* office or at my rooms in Gloucester Street. Yes, here it is,—will you take my card? I assure you that I shall be honoured if you will call upon me."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Curtin," said Desmond, taking the card, "do not speak of it as an honour, I beg of you. Yes, I hope to be in London in about ten days,—my vacation will begin on the 20th,—and you may be sure that I will find you out. I almost wish we were going to town together, but that, you see, is impossible!"

Impossible! but what sayeth the Oriental monarch to those who incline to forget or lose sight of that vicissitude which the great Sophist of Abdera termed "the perpetual flux?"

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

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## CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH A PRIEST OUTWITS A LADY'S MAID.

**I**N TEND on sport, no inconsiderable number of the guests at Holmwood, under the guidance of Captain Meadows, had left for Melton almost immediately after the meeting in the Long Room. Those of the visitors who remained at the Hall were chiefly foreigners and ecclesiastics; and, dinner being over, many of these were assembled in small knots and groups on the broad terrace before the house. It was a beautiful clear summer night, the moon,—now nearly at the full,—shining like a shield in the firmament, and bathing the old house and its grounds in liquid glory. The Earl of Guisborough was walking side by side with a tall, well-made ecclesiastic,—a recently-appointed bishop, a man of good blood, celebrated for the beauty of his person, beauty universally recognized from Manchester to Rome. The subject of their discourse was the Culturkampf in Germany, the Bishop confidently asserting that, sooner or later, Prince Bismarck would be compelled to come to terms with the Holy Father and the Church.

"No weapon," he said,—and his tone and accent were faultless,—"that is formed against the Church can prosper: and if we patiently await God's time, we shall see this new Empire of Germany acknowledge its error."

"I hope so, indeed," said the Earl, "and I am inclined to think such a change of policy not improbable, because I think Prince Bismarck is not, in this matter, acting from a fanatical devotion to Protestantism, but solely from a mistaken idea that he is strengthening the foundations of his government."

"A mistaken idea, indeed," said the other, "and I am convinced it will not be long before Socialism and other forms of Liberalism will compel the Prince and his august master to recognize that in the Catholic Church legitimate authority possesses its surest, most powerful ally. As so-called democratic principles, theories, and their consequent institutions and their practices develop, the Church will assuredly gain thereby, inasmuch as authority will have to fall back upon the Christian theory of government. Kings and princes have long coquetted with Liberalism, but they are now taking to

heart the lesson that apart from the *jus divinum* a monarch is but a puppet, a sham. Yes, it is inevitable that the progress of the Revolution must necessarily turn the hearts of the rulers and of the ruling class toward the Church as the great supporter and asserter of order and morality."

"I see what you mean," replied the Earl, "and I think it very likely to prove true in those countries where what we term the Revolution,—that is, the spirit of disobedience and opposition to constituted authority,—is actively at work in endeavouring to undermine and subvert the existing order. But you know how Tennyson describes England,—

" ' A land of settled government,  
A land of old and just renown,  
Where freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent.' "

Here,—and perhaps in the United States of America,—there are no such secret agencies at work, so that the Church's increase among the Anglo-Saxons is not likely to be promoted by the apprehensions of the higher classes."

"Yet," said the Bishop, "there are in almost every town of importance in the country certain centres of demagoguery and of Atheism. Given a further extension of the suffrage,—and each of these centres must become a power for evil,—that is, from the point of view of those who love our glorious old monarchy. Should Socialism rear its head among the English people, this monarchy and the venerable institutions which cluster round it will have cause to tremble. With regard to America, I have conversed with many clergymen from that country,—I mean the United States. One especially,—a Father Hackett, of New York,—I found to be possessed of keen insight, I may almost say prescience. In his opinion the Catholic Church is destined, under God, to find the greatest triumph in her history within that Republic. Necessity has directed and will continue to guide the stream of emigration from Europe along a certain line, and it is found that by immigration alone certain centres of population within that line promise to become Catholic,—I mean, that the major portion of the population will there be Catholics. Now in America the majority rules, and Father Hackett holds that if the best use be made of the democratic system the Church will, in course of time, acquire marked ascendancy in that

part of the continent which, by virtue of its natural wealth, must always predominate over the whole country. It is a noble, an encouraging prospect. *Jubilate Deo omnes terra!*"

"Allowance, however, should, I think, be made for what I may call leakage," observed the Earl. "I mean that one feature of the American democracy must tend considerably to counterbalance the prospective increment, and that is the fact that the faith of the next generation of American Catholics will be rendered more lukewarm by the godless system of elementary education that is, I believe, in force throughout the United States."

"That, my lord," said the Bishop, "has been long since foreseen and provided for. Your lordship very properly characterizes it as a godless system; and that it has cost the Church serious losses is certainly true; but now that the evil has been traced to its source, it can and will be remedied. In time, the Catholic vote in America will be a factor which every ambitious politician must take into consideration, except perhaps in the more Southern States, along the Atlantic seaboard. Those are intensely Protestant and intensely ignorant, but the great Civil War has so weakened them that their power of opposing will scarcely be worth consideration during a hundred years. Moreover, the Church will probably win a large portion of the negro population. Of course, all this belongs rather to the future; but the Church,—mindful of, and true to her mission,—prepares and seeks to fashion that future. At any rate, Father Hackett assures me that, provided we can secure the education of Catholic children, the time will assuredly come when the New World, revealed as by inspiration to Catholic voyagers and adventurers, will be practically subject to the Vicar of Christ. Everything, thank God! is tending that way,—*ad majorem Dei gloriam*, as they say in the Society of Jesus."

"The ways of Providence are indeed marvellous," said the Earl. "A century ago who would have ventured to predict that Puritanism would so soon, on the ground of its own choosing, become little more than a mere memory, and that,"

At this moment, while the Earl was speaking, his chaplain, Father Nevins, approached, and, having respectfully saluted his ecclesiastical superior, requested the favour of an interview

with the nobleman. Excusing himself to the Bishop, the Earl accompanied his chaplain toward the library.

Hugh Desmond had written a poem. I am aware that in this matter-of-fact age such a statement will probably prejudice the reader greatly to the detriment of this chronicle; the claims of truth, however, are paramount, and the admission has to be made. Not until the work had been completed did he mention it to Blanche, but a short time previous to the great meeting in the Long Room he had secured favourable terms from a Catholic publisher in London, and he intended to devote his vacation to superintending the production of the book. Probably most young ladies, under similar circumstances, would have felt no less anxious to peruse the first offspring of a lover's genius, but however this may be, the important manuscript lay on a small round table in the dressing-room which Desmond had converted into a study, and he himself stood impatiently waiting the promised coming of his lady-love. Lady Guishrough usually retired early, and Blanche had named nine o'clock as the hour when, if possible, she would be present. At an early period in their love-making Lady Blanche had, to a certain extent, confided her great secret to her maid, Madeleine, and Cupid himself could hardly have wished for a better, more zealous emissary than the sharp young Breton maid.

It was some minutes after the appointed hour when Madeleine tapped at the door and, thrusting in her head, whispered softly, "Milodi comes." When Blanche appeared, the keen eye of her lover at once saw that she seemed somewhat agitated, and in reply to his anxious inquiry, he learned that Madeleine had encountered the chaplain in the corridor.

"He was coming apparently from your sitting-room," said Blanche; "he may have wished to see Flowers, but that is hardly possible, because he must know that the schoolmaster invariably retires early. I know he has asked Alice Kendall why she does not take her former place at the practice, and last Sunday evening I met him on my way home from the Tower. I have an uneasy suspicion of espionage; however, I have stationed Madeleine in our own corridor near the staircase, where I think she can obtain timely notice of anyone approaching from below. And now, dear, let me see the poem. Ah, there it is, I think, is it not?"

"But, my love," said Hugh, "if there is any danger of our

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betrayal, let me, for your sake, entreat you not to stay, but to take the manuscript with you. I cannot believe that Mr. Nevins would condescend to play the part of a spy ; nevertheless, this is the first time you have ventured to come here, and I almost wish I had not consented to the proposal. For myself, I care not, but I shall endure untold, unspeakable misery should you encounter trouble that might have been avoided."

"Avoided, Hugh?" she asked, "and for how long, think you? On the first of September I shall be of age, and I am determined that before Christmas my mother shall know of our love. Dear Mamma! I do not think she will be very much annoyed; she is singularly free from caste prejudice. But come, sir, to the poem,"—and she drew a chair to the table, Hugh reluctantly following the example.

"I am almost ashamed, dear, to say how I dread your criticism. Your literary instinct,—if such a term is correct,—is so keen, your judgment so strengthened by the highest modern standards, that I fear I must sink woefully in your estimation. Before you read, however, let me say that I have not made, or thought of attempting, a lofty flight. My imagination, such as it is, was stimulated by the thought of visiting Ireland, and since I received the letter from Carrig Desmond I have written this, which I have entitled 'The Exile's Return.'"

"Fie," answered Blanche, "no more of these excuses. Stay, what is this, Greek? is your returning exile Aristides the Just or Alcibiades, that you begin in this way?"

"Neither, I think I may assure you," said Desmond. "The poem consists of alternate strophe and antistrophe, and the strophes are always preceded by a quotation which serves as a sort of key-note to the section. The line you notice is from the *Iliad*; and it reads in English, '*Let us fly with the ships to our dear Fatherland.*'"

"If you please," said Blanche, "I would rather that you should read the poem to me. I will not interrupt you unless I am very much in want of an explanation. Now begin at once."

There was no alternative but obedience, however much Desmond regretted having put spurs to Pegasus.

"Well," he said, "this is the first strophe,—*Night*,"—and he began to read in a low, distinct tone:—

“ ‘ Sweet, solemn Night ! in whose wide breast  
 The wearied Sons of Labour rest,  
 How oft have I in midnight hour  
 Experienced thy soothing power.  
 How oft have I in life's young spring,  
 Soaring aloft on Fancy's wing,—  
 Like ancient sages in Shinar  
 Contemplating or moon or star,—  
 Lost sight of earth, forgotten cares  
 That have embittered manhood's years,  
 While gazing in thy clear Profound,  
 In silent contemplation drowned.’ ”

“ Poor fellow ! ” interrupted the auditor, with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, “ I did not know that your manhood had been so terribly embittered. How fortunate that the remedy, —star-gazing,—costs so little ! ”

“ If you interrupt me again,” replied Hugh, “ I shall exact a forfeit, so beware.”

“ A forfeit ? ” she asked archly, “ of what nature, pray ? ”

“ A kiss,” he replied, “ and of course you owe me one now,” and he forthwith proceeded to secure the penalty with a determination worthy of Shylock.

“ You will see,” he continued, “ that, like other more ambitious singers, I have been a little moonstruck. Now listen

“ ‘ But most I love thee when on high,  
 Regent of the cerulean sky,  
 Chaste Cynthia floats, whose liquid beam  
 Bathes hill and vale in silvery sheen.  
 Were Actæon's fate, who rashly dared  
 To gaze on her, again declared  
 'Gainst me, still undeterr'd would I  
 Give one last look, and looking die.

O three-form'd goddess, fair Selene  
 While gazing on thee I have seen,—  
 Or thou hast whisper'd unto me  
 Perchance, as thou didst formerly  
 Speak unto him who lay upon  
 Mount Latmos—young Endymion—  
 Yes, visions that no other eye  
 Than mine perchance will e'er descry,  
 Have I beheld while silently,  
 Guardian of mountains, watching thee.’ ”

“ There,” said Desmond, “ now comes the first antistrophe.

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"Our bark—like a Nereid hastening  
 To her home in the emerald caves  
 Of the crystal ocean far away—  
 Bounds over the dark blue waves.  
 Away, away to the west,  
 Where the sun has gone before,  
 As the eagle to her nest  
 We fly to Hybernia's shore :  
 And thither the crested wave  
 Is rolling with rippling smile,  
 As though it longed to lave  
 The shores of Erin's Isle.  
 Bound gallant barque, o'er the silvery sea,  
 Nor tarry to toy with the foam,  
 For the eye of the Exile is eager to see  
 His forefathers' evergreen home.' "

"So much," observed Desmond, "is introductory; the second strophe is——"

At this instant the door was thrown open, and Madeleine, —her face the picture of terror,—entered the room, followed by the Earl of Guisborough and the Rev. Father Nevins. Springing to their feet, the lovers showed by their pale, set features that both at once realized that a crisis in their lives had come. Desmond at once moved forward some paces,—and as he did so a flash of pride and confidence swept over Blanche's face,—and, with a low bow, said :

"To what, my lord, am I indebted for this honour?"

"Blanche," said the Earl, in a calm, authoritative tone, "I demand an explanation of this. As to you, Mr. Desmond, I regret that you have abused my confidence and marred your future career by this unmanly clandestine association with a daughter of my house, an association which I have cause to regard as having been secretly conducted for some time past. I insist upon your immediate departure from Holmwood; I will send my man Chambers to assist you in your preparations, but my decision is final, irrevocable. I will hear no excuses, no apology; but I absolutely require you to depart in the morning. You will find a conveyance to the station awaiting you at an early hour. Father Nevins, you will, if you please, see to this, and to the necessary settlement with Mr. Desmond,—of course, not forgetting his claims in respect to the absence of the usual notification of the termination of an engagement."

"Lord Guisborough," replied the young man, "I accept your dismissal; but I also insist on your attention for a few minutes," and striding past the chaplain, Hugh locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

"How dare you act in this manner, sir?" said the priest.

"Silence, you cowardly eavesdropper and spy!" responded Hugh, bestowing at the same time a look upon the chaplain that caused him to retire behind his patron in evident trepidation.

"And now, my lord," continued Desmond, "I know well that gentlemen of your condition dislike scenes, and that you, under all circumstances, affect a calmness and serenity, whatever your feelings may be. Nay, do not stir,"—as the Earl looked haughtily toward the door,—“unless, indeed, your lordship desires to court publicity, which I think you do not. Well, Lord Guisborough, I am no Edgar Ravenswood, and will not condescend to assume the heroic mood. In as few words as possible, my lord, let me state that your lordship's daughter, the Lady Blanche Meadows, has given me her love, has pledged herself to share my lot as my wife, for weal or for woe; and so help me God!—if God there be,—I will never relinquish the trust she has reposed in me until the hour when she herself shall ask me to free her from the plighted compact."

Hero or no hero, the young man looked gallant and intrepid as he addressed the nobleman, and despite his indignation, the Earl seemed somewhat moved by this daring speech. At this instant, however, his thoughts were turned into another channel by the action of his daughter, who, stepping forward, took one of Hugh's hands in hers and said:

"Yes, papa, Mr. Desmond has spoken the truth. I am his betrothed wife, for weal or woe. How all this will end I cannot foresee,—of course, he must leave Holmwood, and it is better for him to go. Hugh,"—she said, turning toward her lover, and her voice became infinitely tender, while her beautiful eyes were suffused with tears,—“it is better so. Farewell! until we meet again, and until I demand of you my plighted word I shall be always with you in spirit. This is not the era of imprisoned damsels and dripping dungeons. Farewell! My lord, if you please, allow me and my maid to pass."

As Desmond opened the door the lovers exchanged a last look, and Lady Blanche and Madeleine departed. Ere he,

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too, left the room, the Earl turned toward Desmond, who stood with one hand resting on the table.

"Mr. Desmond," he said, "there is a great deal of silly romanticism in my daughter's nature, which time only will subdue. I see how it is in this case; since the affair of the runaway horses, she has woven quite a three-volume romance out of that episode; and of course you figure therein as the rescuing knight, and she poses to herself as the love-lorn princess. I recognize this quite well and easily, and so I am not so much angry as amused. However, it must now come to an end: but I think you will find me not indisposed to further your progress in life. In a short time you will forget all this nonsense, and I hope you will conduct yourself like a wise man, and turn your fine powers to good account. As to Father Nevins, he has only done what he considered his duty, and we shall all come to acknowledge that he acted rightly. He will conclude all the arrangements, and Chambers will do your packing. I really wish you well," and his lordship retired, doubtless felicitating himself upon his tact and skilful management.

Hugh Desmond peremptorily cut short the chaplain's attempted vindication of the line of conduct he had chosen to follow from the moment when a chance encounter in the park induced him to act as a spy upon the lovers. Hugh was well aware that the priest knew that a change of some kind had come over the organist, a change sufficiently important to debar the young man from having recourse to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and of course his position in the Earl's house enabled the chaplain readily to observe any falling off or neglect of religious duty on the part of any one of its inmates. That Father Nevins had played the part of watcher most effectually was now evident enough, but in allowing his detestation of such conduct to move him to treat the priest so contemptuously, it is possible that Desmond did not take into consideration certain religious influences which probably animated the reverend man. To do him justice, Father Nevins appeared to realize that he had acted a more or less unworthy part, although he probably found consolation in the Jesuitical motto that it was all for the "greater glory of God." Finding that his efforts at self-exculpation were contemptuously repulsed, the chaplain proceeded to effect the settlement of the Earl's pecuniary liability to Desmond; but

the organist firmly refused to accept the six months' extra salary tendered as an equivalent for the usual notice of dismissal. He signed a receipt for the amount due, and with this both the chaplain and his patron had to be content. While this settlement was being effected, Chambers had been quietly at work, so that before midnight our hero's boxes and portmanteau were locked and strapped; after which Hugh sat down and wrote a few lines of farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Flowers, Mr. Champernowne, and the Kendalls.

"Chambers," said Hugh, when his letters were all written, "will you be good enough to ask the chaplain to come here?"

"Yes sir, of course," answered the valet, and in a few minutes Father Nevins appeared.

"Mr. Nevins," said Desmond,—and the priest, trivial though the omission was, started and turned red at being thus addressed,—“I have here two or three letters which perhaps you will undertake to convey to the persons for whom they are intended. Unless you do so, I shall have to remain another day in the village, for I have commissioned Mr. Flowers to receive certain small sums of money due to me for tuition, the accounts for which I will forward from London. Will you see that these letters are delivered?”

"I will, of course, do so, Mr. Desmond," answered the chaplain, "and should there be any other—"

"Nothing more, I thank you," said Desmond, and the two men parted, both, it is to be feared, with rancour at their hearts.

Hugh Desmond slept but little during his last night at Holmwood. He merely divested himself of his coat and vest, and stretched himself on the lounge in the little study. At times he would start from his troubled slumber, fancying that he heard a tap at the door, which he would hastily open, half anticipating a note from Blanche conveyed by the trusty Madeleine. He did not know,—how should he have known?—that the Earl of Guisborough had, at least for the present, restrained his daughter's romanticism by the simple expedient of insisting that Blanche should occupy her mother's room that night. With her head pillowed on her mother's bosom, Blanche explained all that had occurred, and she had at last, when quite worn out with tears and agitation, fallen into a troubled sleep. As to Lady Guisborough, I do not know how she felt after the story had been told. She knew her

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daughter's character too well, however, not to feel doubtful that the Earl's summary proceedings would be altogether promotive of the effect aimed at by his lordship. The good lady reflected on the matter for an hour or two, until she, too, was weary of thinking and in turn fell asleep.

It was about six o'clock in the morning when the sound of wheels on the gravel aroused Lady Blanche. Gently removing her mother's arm from her own neck, she sprang to the window, raised the curtain, and was just in time to see her lover being driven in a dog-cart towards the avenue. As he sat there beside Jarvis, she noticed how fixed and determined was his expression, and dropping the curtain she wept like a child. Could Alice Kendall have seen the proud lady of Holmwood at this moment, she might have learned something with respect to the power of Love to cause even the haughtiest eyes to overflow with the same feelings that fill those of the humblest milkmaid with tears.

And thus it was that William Curtin, the reporter, was accompanied to town by the man who on the preceding evening had expressed his regret at the impossibility of their thus travelling together, albeit, so moody and pre-occupied was his companion, that William might have been better pleased had he been journeying alone.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### INTRODUCING A POPULAR FAVOURITE.

OUR hero soon found good reason to be glad that he had made the acquaintance of the reporter. Knowing little or nothing of the great city, Hugh was compelled to be guided by Curtin, and, following his counsel, he engaged a fairly comfortable second-floor in Gloucester Street, Clerkenwell, not many yards from the house in which Curtin himself resided. Had his knowledge of the world,—or of that microcosm which imagines itself to be the macrocosm, and which must, sooner or later, fall to pieces of plethora,—been greater, he would, perhaps, have taken lodgings in some other district, experience going to prove that no one who desires to make his way in London should begin by taking up a residence within hearing of the big bell of St. Paul's Cathedral. Among Londoners

generally nothing so detracts from a man's respectability as this, the bare mention even of such districts as Clerkenwell, Bloomsbury, or Soho being suggestive of costermongers and of that genus of sportsmen whose particular recreation it often is to "shoot the moon."

Having written to his cousin at Carrig Desmond and to Lieutenant Wallace, announcing his arrival in London, Desmond procured a handy pocket-guide to the various places of interest, all of which he conscientiously visited, from the Bank of England to Woolwich Arsenal. Having secured a reader's ticket to the British Museum, he spent much of his time in the great library, while he did not forget to scan the advertising columns of the *Times* every morning with the view of securing employment. Some days elapsed ere he resolved upon the proper course to follow with respect to Blanche. At length the suspense became unbearable, and he determined upon making some effort to communicate with her. He scrupled to write directly to his betrothed,—perhaps he feared his letter would be intercepted,—but, finding among his books a certain lecture on "The Development of Religion" which belonged to Mr. Champernowne, he returned the pamphlet by post, of course with a note in which he thanked the clergyman and explained that his sudden departure from Holmwood had made a personal return of the lecture impossible. About a week after this Desmond received the following letter:—

" HOLMWOOD HALL,

" Rutlandshire,

" DEAR HUGH,

" August 23, 1872.

" You might have addressed me direct; but I understand your motive and feelings, and I know that you have done what is right. Mrs. Champernowne and the vicar are both curious to know the circumstances which induced your sudden departure, and to this curiosity I am indebted for the knowledge I now have of your whereabouts. Were any letter addressed to me to give rise to suspicion, certain demands would probably be made which I should be unable to accede to. In a few days more no one will possess even the shadow of a claim to exercise any control over my actions. You must be patient; now that the inevitable *eclaircissement* has occurred, I myself am well satisfied. I feel more and more convinced that, instead of being led by Fate, instead of being

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as plastic clay in the potter's hands, all rational men and women are Destiny-compellers. So will we be.

"I saw you depart, and I thought it hard to endure. (Shall I confess to having made my eyes red with crying?) But all goes well: my course is fixed; and I am patient because nothing can change my purpose.

"I will impose no other burden on you than that you at once acquaint me with any change of residence you may contemplate.

"One word more: if, as I half suspect, there be any expression of Catholic Christian fervour in your poem, do not publish it. Let it die: in after years we shall be glad to know that it was never given to the world.

"Be patient, dearest!

"I am, your betrothed,

"BLANCHE."

Having made the acquaintance of Taintor, the publisher, Desmond was appointed reviewer and general critic to the *Herald*. He might, indeed, have blossomed or budded into sub-editorship, but the great revulsion in sentiment which he already recognized to be imminent, compelled him to forego a position which only a faithful Catholic could conscientiously occupy.

Since the evening of his initiation, William Curtin had not attended any of the meetings of the Bohemians. He did not dare to trust himself, although he really liked society, but the memory of his fall from grace, and the spirit of rebellion it induced, was too vivid to allow of his yielding to inclination, — or, as he thought, to the voice of the Tempter. Much of his time was passed in Desmond's company, and for the first time in his life Curtin found himself free to unbosom himself, to analyze his thoughts and feelings, to compare the workings of his mind with the brain-impulses and motions of another man. Though so much the younger of the two, Desmond came to exert a healing, strengthening influence over his friend, so that the reporter soon found himself becoming more self-reliant, while the hunted feeling, inseparable from too continuous introspection and morbid brooding, began to give way to a more healthy interest in objective things. Mrs. Curtin observed with glad surprise that her husband grew more cheerful, and she inwardly blessed the day when the stranger,

whose acquaintance William had so fortuitously made, took up his abode in Gloucester Street.

During one of their walks in the Green Park Curtin narrated his adventure with the man of acres and turnips.

"Yes," he said, "we begged his pardon right there in the open road. What else could we do, Mr. Desmond? Tell me, what would you do under such circumstances?"

"Hunger is said to make animals savage and ferocious," replied Hugh; "but in your case it seems that the craving had been in some sort appeased. However, since you wish to know, I think it most probable that, if the turnips were all eaten, I should have thrown their tops in the old tyrant's face."

"You would, eh?" said the reporter; "yes, I am afraid you would, Mr. Desmond. But then, you would have gone to prison,—for he was a justice of the peace,—and have had hard labour."

"My dear fellow," answered Hugh, "in your case I should have welcomed imprisonment."

"But then, you see, Mr. Desmond, we had committed a sin in taking the turnips,—a mortal sin."

"I do not see that, my friend," returned Hugh. "You are a good Catholic, but not even your tender conscience can be permitted to transcend that of St. Alphonsus. According to his *Moral Theology* a nobleman, if in extreme poverty, may steal, if he be too proud or ashamed to beg. A Protestant Christian will tell you that, as an act of theft, to steal a penny is as sinful as to steal a thousand pounds; but this is not Catholic morality, which discriminates between mortal and venial sins. In certain extreme cases, St. Alphonsus, following St. Thomas of Aquin, affirms that all goods are common property, and I can easily show you passages from his *Homilies Apostolicus* where this doctrine of the higher right of the pauper and the penury-impelled thief to act on an emergency as though all things were common is insisted upon."

"Is that so?" inquired Curtin. "Of course it must be since you say so:—begorra, there is a good priest lost in you, Mr. Desmond! But that old *shoneen* of a squire was a Protestant, no doubt, and if I had been able to talk theology like the Pope, he would have sent us to jail all the same."

"Very likely," said Desmond, "unless you could have shown a clean pair of heels after knocking the old rascal

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down, as he seems to have richly merited. But, Mr. Curtin, you have never told me why you happened to leave Ireland in such a pitiable plight. Surely you did not hope to find gold and silver lying along the roads and hedgerows of England?"

"Faith! if I did I was disappointed. No, I might have done well enough at home, and who knows but by this time I would have been a member of Parliament? Stranger things are happening every day. When I was a boy the nobility and gentry were called the natural leaders of the people; now they are nowhere. In Ireland a class of professional politicians is being formed, and their chief qualifications are humbuggery, the gift of the gab, and determination to stick at nothing in achieving their ends."

"Indeed," said Desmond, in an amused tone; "all this is new to me, Mr. Curtin,—perhaps because I am not a politician,—and pray what are those ends? Home rule, I suppose, is one of them, but surely that is a legitimate and very natural aspiration?"

"Yes, sir, Home Rule,—no less than that; Home Rule in the most complete sense of the term."

"Surely you do not mean that they propose absolute separation from England?"

"Nothing else but that, Mr. Desmond, can ever satisfy an appetite like theirs. In the strife of parties which will ensue in Ireland, immediately after the restoration of our Parliament, the Separatists will sooner or later come uppermost. I tell you this candidly, because you are more than half an Irishman; and I may just as well say that Republicanism is strong in Ireland, although, perhaps, the clergy do not like it very much."

"The greater fools they, then," replied Desmond. "Don't be shocked, my good friend; but nothing is clearer to me than that this Republicanism is an admirable tool in the hands of those who are able to exert a powerful influence over the people. I am told that even in America the Catholic clergy silently wield a powerful influence in politics. And so I think that in time the world will see an Irish Republic spring into life?"

"Faith, that I do," answered Curtin, "and then you will find out that Irishmen can govern themselves as well as any other people."

"I do not doubt their ability to do that,—or indeed, for that matter, to govern England, if they had the opportunity," said Desmond. "One thing, however, I see still more clearly,—and that is, that England could not tolerate an independent State such as you anticipate. Should folly, or supposed political necessity, ever permit such a Power to be established a necessity still more cogent and imperative would compel Englishmen to re-conquer the island. An Irish Republic would scarcely be the best of neighbours, Mr. Curtin. But tell me, why did you leave Ireland?"

"Well, Mr. Desmond, it was because of my father. He is a good man, but a very strict one. He wanted me 'priested,' but, sure, I hadn't the vocation. Then I became a printer and learned shorthand; but all the time my father's strictness and denunciations made home worse than purgatory to me. He watched me as a cat does a mouse; saw that I performed my 'duty,' made me read the "Lives of the Saints" until I wished that all the saints were sinners; and at times punished me, for the least offence in life, till I was black with bruises. Nellie knows it all, for it's often she saw it. At last I could stand it no longer, so one day I stowed myself away in a cattle steamer, and was never discovered until the ship got to Bristol. However, it is all forgotten and forgiven now between us: my father meant well; sure he thought it was for the good of my soul. Barring the tramp to London, I have done well in this country, although at first I was obliged to work in some of the big establishments, where they were all Englishmen and Protestants."

"Mr. Curtin," said Desmond, "may I ask if you never felt any doubts on the subject of religion? Surrounded, as you say you have been, by Protestants, and, of course,—as all printers must do,—at times having to read matter opposed to the Church and its claims, have you never once felt a suggestion that, after all, you and your teachers might possibly be mistaken?"

"Yes, Mr. Desmond, I have; but, thank God! I have never encouraged them, never allowed them to take root. I was once employed on a job of 'setting up' a pamphlet or book against the Infallibility, and during all the time I tried to keep repeating to myself the 'Hail Mary.' I made slow, poor work that week, and many of the men, who saw my lips moving, began to think I was insane. I did not mind their

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chaff; however, and the Holy Mother preserved me from being influenced by the book."

"You think, then," said Desmond, "that you owe your safety in this particular to her intercession, do you?"

"Of course I do," replied Curtin. "If you had a claim against the Government, you would try to interest a cabinet minister in your cause; and I have read somewhere of a Franciscan monk who had a vision of two ladders, — one red, the other white. At the top of the red ladder he saw Jesus Christ; at the top of the white one he saw Our Lady. Those who tried to climb the red ladder always fell to the ground; but being told to try the other, they did so, and by the help of the outstretched hands of the Mother of God, they all got into heaven."\*

Desmond could not forbear smiling at the simple, unquestioning credulity of his companion.

"Pardon me, Curtin," he said, "I am sure you know that I would not willingly hurt your feelings; but I must tell you plainly that I think much of our modern Catholicism is creature-worship. My own views are becoming considerably modified; but I tell you candidly that all this excessive devotion to the Mother of Jesus far exceeds anything I expected to find in the Church. Whatever my idea of the Deity might be, all such teaching as that of the Italian school of Mariolaters, — excuse me, I must really use this term! — would appear to me simply blasphemous."

"I am sorry to hear you say so, Mr. Desmond," answered William; "sorry, but not surprised, for I have seen for some time that at heart you are not a Catholic. However, if we who belong to the Church are in error, then God himself is the author of that error since he has confirmed it so strongly."†

"No, my friend," said Hugh, "there is no such confirmation for the devotion we are discussing. As to God being the author of error, I will only say that there is more confirmation of that hypothesis, for St. Paul distinctly says of the followers of Anti-Christ that 'God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'"

\*This extraordinary anecdote the curious reader will find in Liguori's "Glories of Mary."

†This atrocious sentiment was uttered by a celebrated Catholic theologian in the eleventh century, and it has often been quoted with approval by controversialists, among others by the convert-catching Bishop Milner.

Not a cheerful prospect or a very consoling doctrine, I confess, but there it is—a distinct promise and prophecy. When you credit Mary with a closer, more immediate sympathy with man than her Son can have, you remind me of a fine passage in a work by one who in some respects is our greatest living Englishman, Mr. Gladstone. 'As if,'—he says, after much more that I cannot repeat,—'the Maker of woman did not possess in inexhaustible abundance those treasures of tenderness from and out of whose overflow it is that He has adorned the loveliest of His works.'"

"Surely, Mr. Desmond," asked Curtin, "it is not trying to make a Protestant of me you are?"

"By no means, my friend," answered Hngh, "because I have no interest that way. But I do wish you to exercise your reason at least to the extent of refusing to accept the horrible, grotesque, childish fables to be found in that detestable book of Ligouri's, the 'Glories of Mary.' At any rate, you are not even bound to believe them, so why need you appeal to them as aids and supports to your faith?"

"I know," said Curtin, "that I am not, but some of the anecdotes are quite pretty, though one need not believe them to be true, I suppose. I remember one, where it says two young men went to a brothel, but one returned home and went to bed. In the night, says Alphonsus, 'he saw his companion deformed and hideous, standing before him,' and heard him say,—'When I was leaving that wicked house, a devil came and strangled me: my body is in the street, and my soul in hell.'"

"Yes," answered Desmond, laughingly, "but you do not know, perhaps, the commentary which one of your own countrymen made on that story. 'Now, your honour,' he said, 'who was he, or what was he at all? He wasn't his body, for that was in the street; he wasn't his soul, for that was in hell: and is there anything else in a man to make himself? So who was he at all?'"

While the reporter was laughing at this,—they were passing the Junior Athenæum, Piccadilly,—they were overheard and prosed by a tall, very much over-dressed exquisite, who, recognizing Desmond, extended a hand encased in a black coloured glove, and cordially saluted our hero.

"Ha!" he said, "Mr. Desmond; glad to meet you, I am sure. By Jove! sir, the song is first-rate; it has been set to

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music by Dolby :—don't know Dolby, eh? well you must,—and I tell you it will take."

"I am glad to know it," said Hugh, "but permit me :—Mr. Curtin, Mr. Macmurdoch ; Mr. Macmurdoch, my friend Mr. Curtin."

The gentlemen thus introduced bowed and shook hands, after which the stranger, who was an excitable, free-and-easy sort of fellow, turned on his heel and accompanied Desmond and Curtin, or rather piloted them, toward the Haymarket.

"Here," he said, "is *the* place. Come in, and let us drink success to 'England.' Come on!"—and pretending to exert some compulsion, Mr. Macmurdoch soon stood with his acquaintances before a bar to which,—as the smiles and nods of the attendant Hebes plainly demonstrated,—he was by no means altogether a stranger.

Seeing that Curtin looked somewhat mystified, Hugh explained that Mr. Macmurdoch was the celebrated music-hall artiste, whose name and fame were known all over London, and whose mere appearance on the stages of western, central, and eastern places of entertainment was so sought after, that every evening cabs were in readiness at the various stage doors to convey him, true to the minute, from one to another. Among his myriad admirers no one was more glowing than Mr. Joseph Taintor, publisher of the *Catholic Herald*, and it was by and through this gentleman that Mr. Macmurdoch and Desmond came to know each other. At the time of their introduction, Mr. Taintor was suffering from a peculiar affection induced by too earnestly contemplating the contents of a wide-mouthed vessel of glass, and which,—to use Curran's brilliant witticism,—had made "a runaway rap at his head." It was probably the champagne which prompted the publisher to describe Hugh as a poet ; while Desmond himself was quite certain that nothing less than champagne would have induced him to accede to Mr. Macmurdoch's proposal that he, Desmond, should write, for Mr. Macmurdoch's behoof and benefit, a patriotic song. The promise had been given, however, and of course the song had to be written, because Taintor gave our hero no rest until the thing was done. "And Mr. Macmurdoch is pleased with the song?" said Curtin.

"Pleased? my dear fellow ; not merely pleased, by any means. Take my word for it, it will be all over town in a

fortnight. Dolby himself is enthusiastic. Ah, yes, and let me tell you he is hard to satisfy."

"Really," observed Desmond, "I should scarcely imagine that a few hastily written lines like those I sent you can ever hit the public taste, or become popular in the manner you predict. However, I hope you may be successful with them, Mr. Macmurdoch; of course, much,—nay, all,—depends upon the music."

"I am no bad judge of a song, Mr. Desmond, and Dolby is a better one. I have taken the liberty of forwarding to you, under cover to Taintor,—as I did not know where you live,—a slight recognition of the service you have done me."

"A recognition?" said Hugh, "I do not quite understand your meaning, Mr. Macmurdoch. Surely, you do not mean that you —"

"My good friend," said the singer, "you must excuse me,—you really must; but the fact is that you are delightfully verdant—too awfully green, by Jove! You are a talented fellow,—scholar, writer, and all that; but you do not know the world. Now look at me,—almost sprung from the gutter. Yes, gentlemen, almost literally out of the gutter. No education,—barely able to write a letter,—not much of a voice; yet I am a popular singer and all the rest of it. Why? Because I know how to humbug, to trim my sails to the wind, to fall in with the popular taste. Well, I make thirty or forty pounds every night I sing; and here you come, increase my stock in trade, and then your pride steps in because I am honest enough to pay, in some measure, for the service. Why, my friend, the cheque I have forwarded is not equal to the tenth part of what your song will bring to my pocket within the next month or two."

"But," said Hugh, laughing in spite of himself, "Mr. Macmurdoch, I wrote the song as, and intended it for a gift, and——"

"Pooh, pooh! my boy; nonsense. Either you accept the cheque or I return the song, that's flat. What do you take me for, eh?"

"Well, well," said Hugh, "let it be as you will. At all events, here's to its success, be its real merits what they may!" At the time, our hero assumed that Macmurdoch had sent him perhaps five pounds as a token of gratitude. To say that he was surprised when, on returning home, he found a letter from

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Taintor awaiting him with a cheque for fifty pounds, is to say very little. He subsequently discovered that the singer was an eccentric, spendthrift fellow; but in one respect Macmurdoch possessed some prescience, as Desmond's song became a prime favourite in the music halls, and ere long was whistled and sung by half the urchins in London.

"By the way, Mr. Desmond," said the singer, "I am going to test the song to-morrow evening. You must come with me; I insist. There is to be a Friendly Lead at a house I know. Will you go? And you, sir,"—addressing Curtin,—“I hope you will come too.”

"A Friendly Lead," said Hugh, "pray what is that?"

"I think I know," observed the reporter, "and really, provided he does not stay too long, I think Mr. Desmond would be amused."

"Very well, then," returned Desmond, "we will go,—Mr. Curtin and I."

"Give me your card: where do you live? I will call for you," said the singer. "Whew! Clerkenwell: why the deuce do you hang out in that quarter? Low; damned low! but you are a stranger to London."

Before leaving the bar, Mr. Macmurdoch provided himself with a cigar. Upon reaching the street, he shook hands so very impressively that his new friends concluded that he had stood before one or two bars in the course of the day, which indeed was the fact. Poor fellow! he was only a music-hall singer, but, after all, who shall affirm that his mission in life was inferior, in point of salutariness to his fellow men, to that of a precentor in the great cathedral of St. Paul?

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### AN OFF-NIGHT FOR THE STAR IN THE EAST.

THE next morning, while he was breakfasting, Desmond heard a firm, but springy, foot, or pair of feet, ascending the staircase, and in another moment, after a preliminary knock at the panels, the door was thrown open and Lieutenant Wallace entered the room. He was a rather short, square-shouldered man, with light hair and beard, and a hale-looking face, bronzed by the sun-laden breezes of the English Channel.

He had seen service in the Black Sea, during the war with Russia, in China, and on the coast of Africa, but his hopes of promotion had been interfered with and blighted by his idiosyncrasies, especially by one fatal habit of criticizing the wisdom which dictated the orders which he and others were compelled to obey.

"Well," he said, grasping our hero's hand with all a sailor's fervour, "so I have found you at last! Sit down and finish your breakfast, there's a good boy; remember, 'meat and mass never hindered work.' Speaking about the mass, however, reminds me of something. Do you know that down in Devonshire we have had an invasion,—yes, sir, a regular invasion,—of a cohort of pestilential fellows, who will, unless we can rout and vanquish them, make the chances of the mass being re-established very slender indeed?"

"Sit down, Mr. Wallace," answered Hugh, "and, if you like, take some tea. I am glad to find you looking so well. There, that's right; now you are anchored, as the old coast-guardmen say, and I can talk with you as with a rational being. An invasion, you say? Has the Rev. Charles Catt been restored to a state of grace, and is another revival stirring the souls of the good people of Torweston and Tormavy? or has Mr. Calfton resumed —"

"No, my friend, nothing of the kind, I assure you. The Rev. Charles Catt continues one of the shining lights among the Bryanites, and old Jenkins' second daughter has been married to Jack Clymo, who, you will remember, was with Big Elliott on a certain occasion mentioned in one of my letters. I got Jack to help me the other day in one of my fishing excursions, and I asked him,—it was a few weeks before his marriage,—if he did not consider the little incident in which Catt figured so prominently somewhat of an objection to the lady. 'Not a bit of it, sir,' he replied; 'what I saw that night convinced me that she would make a good wife, and what is good enough for a preacher is surely good enough for me. She has a fine figure, Mr. Wallace, and a slice from a nut loaf is never missed.'"

"Not at all bad reasoning," said Hugh with a smile; "but the invasion, what of that?"

"All in good time, if you will be patient. The fact is that Dr. Kekewich, who has superintended matters at every birth in Torweston and Tormavy for the last forty years, feels him-

self growing older, and a few months ago he enlisted the services of a young assistant, a fellow from London, who had just won his diploma. This young sawbones is called Hanaford, and, to give him his due, he seems a very clever, intellectual fellow. At any rate, he is about to marry Kekewich's youngest daughter, so he will have a good practice besides a goodly portion with his wife. Of course, you know that the old vicar of Torweston, who had been ill so many long years, is dead? Ah, yes; well, the new vicar is called Blakiston,—one of his brothers was a middy with me in the *Dauntless*,—and he is an officious kind of fellow, a moderate High Churchman. They tell me that he goes about poking his nose everywhere; the old women are positively afraid of him, as he is one of those men who will take no rebuff. Already he has stirred the town up on the question of sanitation, and he is at the head of a movement to secure an act of Parliament authorizing the extension and improvement of Torweston harbour."

"And he, I suppose, is the invader of whom you spoke?" said Desmond, while the lieutenant paused to take breath.

"No, no," replied Mr. Wallace: "you youngsters are so impulsive that you cannot wait to hear the end of a story. Well, somehow or another, this Mr. Blakiston fell into a discussion with Dr. Hanaford, and (the doctor says, at any rate) got the worst of it. Next Sunday,—and both doctors happened to be at church that evening,—the parson preached a sermon on Unbelief, which a few days afterward, when they met in the town reading room, young Hanaford objected to. It seems they both got rather warm over the matter,—too warm by half. The upshot of the whole matter was, that Hanaford went off to Plymouth and induced a noted Secularist, who was on a lecturing expedition from London, to visit Torweston. For once in their lives the Church of England parson, the Bryanites, Wesleyans, Independents and their leaders were all united, and neither for love nor money could a place, not even a fish-loft, be hired for the lecturer."

"So the doctor was disappointed, I suppose," said Hugh. "Well, for the lecturer's sake, one can hardly be sorry; for some of your fishermen are rough, unruly men."

"No, my friend: if any were disappointed it was the fanatics. Yes, Mr. Desmond, and the responsibility is mine,—at least, partly so. I heard how matters were standing, it

was the talk of the district, and for a moment or so I felt glad to know how determined the people all were to defend Christianity, even although they knew so little of its real nature. But, sir, in a short time I saw that all this was most un-English. Yes, my friend, damned un-English," and the Lieutenant struck the table violently, at the imminent hazard of Hugh's tea equipage, "and I made up my mind that the man should have fair play."

"Well done!" cried Hugh approvingly; "spoken like a true man and an Englishman; I heartily approve the resolution."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Wallace, "I scarcely anticipated this; to say truth, I really came here prepared to read you a lesson in toleration."

"My good friend," answered our hero, "I have learned much since we parted, of which more anon. However, proceed with your narrative, if you please, for I find it extremely interesting."

"Humph!" ejaculated the other, in evident surprise; "well, where was I? Oh, I remember. The more I thought of it the more I disliked the cowardice that underlay the whole business; and finally I went over to Torweston, sought out Hanaford, and made him an offer of my large barn on the confines of our parish. He accepted the offer, after pointing out that in all probability I should be held responsible for inviting the lecturer. I told him that I was not afraid of what my neighbours would say, as they had been abusing me any time throughout the last ten years, and one charge more brought against me would not matter much. Besides, my friend, to tell the truth, I had made up my mind to fortify myself with a little reading, and then I would annihilate that lecturer at the close of his address, and take the wind out of the sails of Blakiston and the Dissenters. However, to make a long story short, the man came to Torweston, and in due time put in an appearance at the old shed. It is quite a large building, as you know. The former owner has had as many as a hundred sheep in there at one time. Jack Clymo had fixed it up nicely, though there were not many seats, to be sure; yet there was a platform, and we had more than a dozen paraffin lamps."

"Did many persons come to hear this man?" inquired Hugh.

"The place was full, sir," answered Wallace, "and many of



the men looked ripe for a disturbance. However I had stationed Big Elliott and Jack at the door, and Elliott is a match for any two men in Devonshire. Moreover, Dodge, the Torweston policeman, was there also. Kekewich, Hanaford, Calfton, your old friend Captain Topp, and a host of the big Torweston men were present, and two nephews of the old pilot. Before the lecturer entered, I proposed that one of the doctors should take the chair, on the old maxim, *ubi tres medici, duo athei*, because we might regard Calfton as a *doctor* of Calvinistic divinity. However, the lecturer settled that question by acting as his own chairman, and I tell you that at the outset he declared that he thought he could undertake to answer for the maintenance of order; and, upon my word, he looked well able to do so. Well, my friend, he spoke for an hour and three quarters, the subject being the Bible. His arraignment of revelation was complete and fundamental. Of course, being a trained speaker, he put his case skilfully; but I am bound to say not very unfairly. It was amusing to see how the courage of all our local champions,—my own, also, I confess,—evaporated. We all felt that to debate with such a man would be a forlorn hope, but we tried. At least Captain Topp, Calfton, Dunn, the Bryanite, and I did. The fact is, however, that we had never seriously looked at the matter from a rational standpoint, and the lecturer, though treating us very kindly, convinced us that the time had come when it behoved churchmen and sectarians alike to be modest. That is the invasion I meant. I know that many persons have been seriously affected, and a great deal of infidel literature, —some of it trashy enough,—has been circulated among us."

Desmond saw, or fancied he saw, that Lieutenant Wallace had been considerably shaken in his beliefs. Such, in truth, was the case, for with his characteristic ardour, Mr. Wallace had provided himself with large quantities of controversial literature, determined, if possible, to reduce Christianity to a mathematical certainty. Hanaford, however, had succeeded in establishing a sort of club, which he called the "Eclectics," and thus it came to pass that regular meetings were held in Torweston for the study and discussion of subjects of the highest gravity and importance to mankind. Very much to their annoyance, the authorities of the various religious sects soon discovered that many of their brightest young men had repudiated the chapels and given in their adhesion to the club.

Various expedients were tried to counteract and stem this dangerous movement, but revivals, prayer-meetings, and an importation of new ministers all proved unavailing. Moreover, other lecturers visited the district at stated terms, and mainly through their influence it came to pass that Torweston, though it lay outside the great railway to London, began to be stirred and quickened by the higher thought of the age.

Our hero spent the greater portion of the day with his friend the Lieutenant, who was sojourning with his daughter at a small family hotel in Adam Street, Adelphi. Of course, in communicating the fact of his having resigned his position at Holmwood, Hugh had to acknowledge that he had really been dismissed, and that almost without notice.

"I have told you this, Lieutenant," he said, "in confidence; and you know that there is a reservation in my communication. This naturally appears strange to you, since you cannot understand why, if I have done nothing unworthy of a gentleman, I should have been so summarily dismissed, or why I should conceal the causes from an old friend like yourself. I will only say, however, that another person has to be considered by me, a person whose name I must not mention. Time, however, I am sure, will explain all."

"I am perfectly satisfied, my dear fellow," returned Wallace, "the more easily, perhaps, because your blushes long since convinced me that there is a woman in the affair. Confound these women! they are always marring and muddling: wrecking aspirations here, making wise men act like fools there. Well, it is human nature, I suppose. However, so long as your love-making has not taken the Torweston method of sacrificing to Venus first, and professing adoration afterwards, you are all right, I dare say."

"By the way," said Hugh, "I have not yet asked after the Toynbees. How are they getting on?"

"Have you not heard?" answered Mr. Wallace; "by the influence of the Hon. and Rev. Richmond Kirke, Toynbee has obtained the head mastership of a well-endowed grammar school on the borders of Epping Forest. Kirke has a rectory in that neighbourhood, so, you see, it will be much more convenient for him to do his own love-making too."

"You assume, then, that Mr. Kirke is in love with Mr. Toynbee's niece?" inquired Hugh.

"Assume, man! nothing of the kind; let me tell you. They

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were made for each other, and Fevre tells me that he never saw a couple more attached than they are."

Who shall say what feelings coursed through Desmond's brain in the brief silence that ensued? Of one thing he was certain,—that Edith Allyn had been his first love. So much he could acknowledge to himself with perfect acquiescence in the destiny that had sundered them. As to how far he regretted that destiny, this was a question that honour and truth alike forbade him to confront. If it were true that Edith was the promised wife of another, surely it was well. These first loves, however, like sword thrusts, leave their scars behind them, as Desmond discovered when his friend observed:

"Toynbee's school is but a few miles out on the Great Eastern; suppose you and I run down and give them a call to-morrow?"

"I thank you; no, not quite so soon; remember there is my work on the *Herald*, and I assure you I have quite a large pile of books at my rooms, awaiting my critical scalping knife. But I have a proposition to make to you instead."

Our hero then told the Lieutenant of his new acquaintance, Macmurdoch, and proposed that Mr. Wallace should accompany them to the Friendly Lead that evening. Having consulted his daughter Clara,—a lively, bright little lady of fifteen, who was being educated in a convent,—the Lieutenant found there was no impediment in the way of his acceptance, and shortly after the two friends proceeded towards Clerkenwell.

"I find that Clara is anxious to return home," said Mr. Wallace, as they entered the Strand, "and of course that is natural. I do not propose to send her away again, as my expectations in sending her to the convent have not been quite fulfilled, and I am sure that her acquirements are not as solid as they would have been under another system. But as this is my only holiday in twelve months, I shall not accompany her. She has travelled alone before now, and a tip to the guard at Paddington will make all right. Now, what do you say to my plan of running over to Ireland, where, it seems to me, your greatest interest lies at present? Eh, will you go?"

Hugh thought for a moment, and then replied:

"On condition that we do not extend our trip beyond a week or ten days, I am very willing. Not otherwise."

Lieutenant Wallace agreed to this, although he thought the

time unreasonably short, but he saw clearly enough that Desmond had some particularly strong motive which induced this limitation, while he was sufficiently acute to infer that this motive and his reservations on the subject of his dismissal from Holmwood were in some way connected. By working tolerably hard for about a couple of days our hero could finish his reviews, and thus contrive to be about two weeks in advance of the *Herald*, while he could arrange with Curtin with respect to having his letters forwarded.

Upon Desmond's introducing his friends to each other, the reporter said :

"Lieutenant Wallace?—surely not the Lambert Wallace, R.N., whose contributions to the *Herald* used to interest us all so much?"

"The very same," replied Desmond, while the lieutenant looked gratified, as men always look when their literary productions are thus favourably alluded to. "Mr. Wallace," he added, "is an old friend of mine, and he will accompany us this evening,—that is, if Mr. Macmurdoch keep his appointment; he promised to be here at half-past six, and it is nearly that now."

"There is a four-wheeler coming down the street now," observed Curtin, who stood near the window. "Yes, it has stopped at the house; aye; and here comes Mr. Macmurdoch."

A mingled odour of jockey-club and cigar smoke followed the great singer into the room. He was attired in a short cut-away coat, not unlike a sailor's monkey-jacket in shape, and the heavy jewelry that had on the previous day adorned his person had all been rigorously excluded from his evening toilet.

"My friend Lieutenant Wallace," said Hugh, as he introduced the gentlemen, "has heard of your fame, Mr. Macmurdoch, and as his stay in town will be a brief one I have brought him along this evening, for I am sure, whatever the nature of the entertainment may be, he will at least enjoy your singing."

"Charmed to have the gentleman go with us, really," said the singer. "I love sailors, they are such fine patriots. Even a trashy song in praise of our army and navy makes them applaud the roof off almost, and there are post-captains in town who are not too proud to ask me to dinner, which the soldiers are though."

"Too proud, Mr. Macmurdoch?" asked Wallace; "I do not understand. Why, my dear sir, you must be richer by ten times ten than one-half of the post-captains I know."

"Perhaps not, sir," said the other with a dubious shake of the head; "but if I were, no one knows better than I do that mere riches do not make a gentleman. I was in at the Cheshire Cheese only to-day with a fellow they call Thackeray Junior,—he writes blood-and-thunder novels, earns money and wastes it like a fool. Just now he is down on his luck, and damnably seedy, but he has been educated like a gentleman. As we were taking our lunch he began to say how much he envied me, but I tell you as we went up Fleet Street together, that poor devil of an author, though dressed in threadbare black, and with trousers bagged at the knees, was perfectly at ease, while I, with my fine clothes, always fancy that I look like a hog in armour."

"Nonsense, Mr. Macmurdoch," said Hugh, "I see you have allowed yourself to become morbidly sensitive on this matter. Take a wiser view, I beseech you, and bear in mind that honest worth and upright intention are sterling metals the whole world over. And now, let me ask if you can throw any light on the programme for to-night?"

"That I can, Mr. Desmond: look here,"—and he drew a somewhat smoky-looking printed card from his pocket. "Read this aloud, if you please; I fancy it will strike you as a literary curiosity."

Desmond took the card and read therefrom the following interesting and elegant announcement:

"BIRD IN HAND; MILE END GATE.

Proprietor, MR. TOM VINCENT.

#### A MEETING

Will be held at the above House on Wednesday for the benefit of our old and respected friend,

BILL JONES, BETTER KNOWN AS CHUCK-I-OVER,

Who has had the misfortune to be laid up with a Poisoned Hand for several weeks, causing him thus to make his first appeal. We, the undersigned, earnestly hope he will meet with that support he so justly deserves.

Chairman, JACK SARGENT. Vice, HARRY PASH.

Assisted by Abe Lyons, Jimmy Little, Bill Sargent, Lampy, Old Black Bill, Irish Mike, Jack Kurd, Old Bob Girdle, Young Bob Girdle, Fat Tommy, Harry Hilton, Teddy the Sweep, Young Special, Old Special, Dick the Kid, Bill Nowell, Tim the Potman, Pearly Tom, Country Ted, Bill Pardum, Mike Lanigan, Tommy Jones, Bob Jones, Boney, Pincher, Tom Jacko, Jim the Faker, and other Oriental Stars and Knights of the Barrow.

*"Si Romæ fueris, Romano vivito more."*

When the laughter subsided, our hero observed :

"The final precept is worth observing, and we must all try to-night to do as the Romans do, I suppose."

"Precisely," answered the Lieutenant, "for the old saw says, It is ill going to Rome to fight with the Pope."

"Well, gentlemen," said Macmurdoch, "if you are ready, let us go: it is a pretty long drive to Mile End."

It was indeed a pretty long drive. On their way Macmurdoch inquired of our hero if he knew what Barrow Knights were, and when Desmond acknowledged his ignorance he was told that a Barrow Knight was a member of the ancient and numerically respectable order of costermongers.

"To tell you the truth," said the singer, "this Bill Jones, the owner of the poisoned hand, is quite a well-known coster himself. I suppose you will not respect me the more for it, but the fact is I like to stand well with these people, as no inconsiderable portion of my earnings comes from the Cambridge and another music-hall in the East End. Look these, that is Aldgate Pump; now we are fairly in the Orient as Thackeray Junior terms it. By-the-bye, it was he tucked in that bit of Latin at the foot of the card you read. He leads a funny, double sort of life. I have known him give a five-guinea champagne supper, and a week after he has borrowed a 'bob' for beer. When you come to think of it life is a screaming farce. I knew an old nobleman who used to gloat over a model of the Florentine Venus at a Museum in Oxford Street, yet it was found at his death that he had left ten thousand pounds to restore a church in Yorkshire. Yes, life's a funny thing, and I sometimes fancy that we all have a skeleton in our upper chamber. However, here we are, close to the 'Bird in Hand.'"



Having dismissed the cab, Mr. Macmurdoch and his companions entered the hostelry. The proprietor, Mr. Tom Vincent, was presiding at his bar, and he welcomed the celebrated singer with great cordiality and respect.

"Well, Tom," said Macmurdoch with a patronizing air, "I have brought some friends down to the Lead. I suppose we may go up, eh?"

"Certainly, sir, certainly," said the host; "welcome, gentlemen; follow me if you please."

A large room at the back of the second floor had been set apart for the benefit of Chuck-i-over. The door stood hospitably open, but before they entered Mr. Tom Vincent uttered a friendly warning.

"Gents,—not you, Mr. Macmurdoch, as I know you are fly enough, but your friends are not perhaps so fly as you are,—let me advise you not to flash any gold. There are sure to be some queer coves in there, and it's always best not to tempt them too much."

"Right you are, Tom," replied Macmurdoch; "gentlemen, we had better keep together, if possible. Just observe the customs of the place, and look out for your watches."

One custom evidently universal among the assembled company was that of smoking low-priced tobacco. A long table stood in the middle of the room, and a goodly company of both sexes occupied chairs on either side. At equal distances from one another, and as fairly posited in the median line of the superficies of the table as the famous logical donkey was placed between the hay-stacks, were four white dinner-plates, in each of which were sundry half-crowns, shillings, and six-pences, contributed for the benefit of the old and respected Mr. Jones, better known to fame as Chuck-i-over. This gentleman occupied a chair directly opposite the "vice," Harry Pash. His left hand was somewhat catentatiously bound up in a sling, his right was most affectionately clasped around the handle of a pewter pot. As Mr. Macmurdoch and his companions approached the seat of honour, its occupant, Mr. Jack Sargent, rapped loudly with his gavel and electrified the company by the announcement:

"Ladies and gentlemen, you will all learn with pleasure that a celebrated public character has favoured us with his presence this evening. Our friend, Chuck-i-over, being, as he says, unaccustomed to public speaking, desires me to thank

Mr. Tom Macmurdoch, the eminent singer and favourite of the muses, the modern Orpheus, et ceter, et ceter, for the kind patronage and amiable condescension with which he—er—er, in short, ladies and gentlemen, Tom Macmurdoch has come down to Bill's benefit, and blow me ! but he's a damned good-hearted fellow, and I drink his health and long life."

Seats having been found for the new-comers, and each plate having been honoured by a substantial donation in silver, the chairman promptly knocked down Old Bob Girdle for a song. Bob's voice sounded like a cross between a fog-horn and a buzz-saw, but his song contained a chorus which all could sing, and sung it was with gusto. As the room became filled, which it did very soon, Tim the Potman, who belonged to the house, opened the upper halves of the windows. After every song the assiduous Tim darted hither and thither in quest of orders, after which he would vanish for a brief interval, only to return followed by two assistant Ganymedes, all three being marvellously laden with trays of glasses, tankards of hot water, and pewter pots of beer. Then it was that the chinking of coins would be heard as they fell into the ready plates on the long table, it being evidently a point of etiquette never to pocket any change, and Chuck-i-over's face,—I wish I could term it an honest one,—beamed and glowed like that of the harvest moon. At last, the chairman beckoned to Macmurdoch, and whispered that he thought the proper moment had arrived :

"You see," he said in reply to a puzzled stare from Lieutenant Wallace, "you see we are just now at our best,—all in good humour, and so on. A leetle further on, jist a leetle, and the drink will begin to touch some of our heads,—the ladies mostly begins to turn rusty first,—so now's the time. Ladies and gentlemen ! order ! Mr. Tom Macmurdoch, the famous Star, is going to favour us with an entirely new song, written by a friend of his'n now present. You all have heard Mr. Macmurdoch, and consequently you need not be told that when a man of his quality comes to a Lead like this on behalf of a poor broken-down coster, it shows what kind of a heart is thumping inside his wes'cut. Order, order, for a song !"

For quite a couple of minutes there was wild disorder, inasmuch as Harry Pash and Jim the Faker inaugurated a tornado of plaudits which even the Chairman could not resist. When the storm was over, Mr. Macmurdoch rose to his feet.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "my song is a patriotic one, 'England,' and it has never yet been sung in public. If you like it, all I ask is that you show your appreciation in a practical manner by making one more effort to fill those plates before I go. Ahem!"

## ENGLAND.

O England, dearest England!  
Our own loved motherland,  
The brightest gem the world can show,  
Long may she peerless stand.

Lift high the red-cross banner;  
Our fathers bore it well  
Mid tempest's roar, by every shore  
Where oceans surge and swell.  
Now, Englishmen, be true men,  
True as your sires of old;  
Like them, oppose to England's foes  
Your hands, your hearts, your gold.

Though Faction rear her venom'd head  
To menace or beguile,  
Or foreign hosts affront our coasts,  
We fear nor force nor wile.  
For Englishmen are true men,  
Loyal and proud and brave;  
The land they own is theirs alone,  
Where never trod a slave.

O England, mother England,  
Thy children turn to thee,  
From Bathurst Cape to Newfouhdland,  
Beyond the Western Sea.  
Where Ganges' tide rolls deep and wide,  
Where Austral streams run gold,—  
In every zone thy name is known,  
Thy radiant record told.

Unfurl the dear old banner;  
Unfurl and lift it high,  
That all our race, in every place,  
May see that banner fly.  
From Canada to New South Wales,  
That race shall wax in might,

Till land and sea shall girdled be,—  
The circlet of our right.

O England, dearest England,  
Our own loved motherland,  
The brightest gem the world can show,  
Long may she peerless stand.

Had Desmond been a vain young man his vanity would have been gratified on this occasion. Never before had the "Bird in Hand" been so shaken and rocked. Tom Vincent, knowing that the great singer was on his feet, had brought up all his cronies and friends from below, and these, crowding into the apartment, applauded and cried "Encore!" Macmurdoch, throwing a sovereign into the plate before him, seized his hat, hastily shook hands with Jack Sargent and Pash, and, making a sign to his friends to follow, elbowed his way to the door. Here they encountered Tom Vincent, and were compelled to accede to his request that they would take a parting glass with him. While this valedictory ceremony was being performed, the landlord inquired which of the gentlemen was the author of the song which the Star singer had rendered so magnificently.

"This one, my friend Mr. Desmond," said Macmurdoch, just as Tim the Potman and his aides entered the bar. "By-the-bye, Mr. Desmond, you must come down to the Cambridge on Saturday, just to see how it goes before a full house."

"It is quite impossible for me to do so," answered Hugh, "because my friend the Lieutenant and myself are to leave for Ireland on Friday evening."

"For Ireland, indeed!" said the singer. "May I ask to what part?"

"To Carrig Desmond, in the county Carlow, where I have a relative whom I have never seen."

At this moment one of Tim's assistants touched our hero by the arm.

"Pardon, your honour!" he said. "They call me Irish Mike. Just a word wid' you if you please. Arrah! Mr. Vincent, let us be a moment,"—as the landlord seemed about to order him away,— "what I have to say will interest the gentleman."

Desmond suffered himself to be drawn a little aside from his friends, whereupon Mike whispered:

"Is your honour the cousin of Maurice Desmond, the Squire at the ould castle?"

"I believe so, my friend," said Hugh; but why do you ask? You seem to know him."

"Bedad! until a month or so ago I was one of his servants, your honour. I have heard of you, too, I think, as the Squire has made us all know who is to be his heir. Well, your honour, I left home mainly because the priest, Father O'Ruarc, has come to live at the castle; and he has great influence over the Squire and is thryin' to make him retrinch his expinses. One word from me, your honour, before you go, —beware of that same Father O'Ruarc, for he will try hard to do you an injury."

"Thank you, Mike, for your information; I will be careful," and Desmond put a coin into the poor fellow's hand, coupling it with a warning to take good heed to his ways in London.

"Wisha! long life to your honour!" said Mike, pocketing the money, "and success to you wherever you go;" and in response to Tim's angry call, he hurried off to collect his tankards and glasses.

"After all," thought Desmond, as he took his seat in the cab, "who shall say that I may not have good cause to be glad that I attended this extraordinary gathering to-night? At any rate, Father O'Ruarc, forewarned is forearmed; and I shall take care not to play too blindly into your reverence's hand."

This was a wise resolution, and perhaps the humble potboy had done our hero good service by thus giving him a Friendly Lead.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### WHEREIN THE LIEUTENANT MEETS AN IRISH PATRIOT.

CARRIG DESMOND was boldly situated on a hill overlooking the Slaney. Tradition assigned the close of the ninth century as the period of its erection, when Cormack, the great warrior, poet and historian, was king and bishop at Cashel. Here, too, another tradition said the traitor Maolmua for a time confined the gallant but unfortunate Mahon, elder brother of Brian the Great; and, indeed, the square old

pile with its two gloomy towers brown with age, at least where any part of the walls could be seen through the luxuriant ivy, looked much more like a dungeon than a place wherein one would voluntarily reside. Of course, it had originally been built as a fortress, and before the Cromwellian cannon had been brought to bear on it, the castle was considered impregnable. Nevertheless, it was by no means an uncomfortable residence, even from a modern point of view, although the windows were undeniably small, the doors low, and the main staircase narrow and winding. In the middle of the courtyard there was a deep draw-well with an arched ivy-covered roof or pent-house, and there were ample accommodations for an establishment considerably larger than that of the present owner and inmate, Maurice Desmond, Esq., J.P. On all sides the view was most beautiful,—a landscape of richest verdancy framed on the east, south, and west by ranges of mountains. At the foot of the hill, and at intervals along the road by the river, were the cabins of the peasantry,—not such trim and picturesque cottages as those of rural England, although far superior both in convenience and appearance to the rude limestone shanties of modern Munster, and almost mansions if put in comparison with the wretched shielings of Connemara.

The hill, steep and almost precipitous on the east, sloped gently on its south-western side. On the ridge or crest of this slope was a large, fairly-kept garden with broad gravel paths, and lower down was a sort of small park or stretch of pasture, in which two or three fine hunters and a young colt were grazing. It was a fine morning, and our hero and Lieutenant Wallace, who were in the garden with the Squire, accustomed though they were to the green beauties of England, acknowledged that the landscape upon which they now looked could scarcely be more charming.

"The little brook you see there at the foot of the hill," said the Squire, "ought long since to have made me wealthy, but, faith! it never did. They say,—that is, a Dublin chemist once said,—that it is a chalybeate spring: but I never felt the least desire to turn the old place into a pleasure or health resort. Cousin Hugh, you have been to school recently; what was the name of the nation in Pontus that was so famous for working in steel?"

"The Chalybes, if my memory serve me," answered Hugh, "but why do you ask that?"

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"Faith, I was thinking that the old Milesians never came from that part of the world, otherwise, maybe, my taste would have urged me to try my hand at converting the steel in that same spring into gold. Are you fond of Scott, Lieutenant Wallace?"

"Very much so," returned that gentleman; "indeed, to speak the plain truth, I find that the older I grow my liking for him increases."

"Precisely my case too, sir," said the Squire. "Indeed, since the death of my poor boy I have found relief from care and a remedy against moping in the Waverley novels. You remember 'St. Ronan's Well,' the tontine hotel, and all the rest of it?"

"Quite well, I assure you," answered the Lieutenant; "you would not like to have Carrig Desmond so profaned!"

"God forbid!" ejaculated the Squire, so fervently that Hugh could not refrain from smiling. The Squire, perceiving this, turned toward him and said: "You are amused, cousin, at the warmth I have manifested, but let me tell you that my nephew there, Father Lawrence, has already been approached by some Yankee-Irishman,—a bad mixture that same!—who has an eye on the old place for a watering-place. Faith! Father Lawrence tells me that he soon sent him to the right-about, and I am glad of it. How would you like the old castle turned into a fashionable hotel, cousin, eh?"

"I do not think I should like it at all," returned Hugh, "but, in my opinion, there is not the slightest fear of such a transformation ever taking place. Indeed, I am surprised that such an idea should ever have entered an American head. Carrig Desmond is too far from Dublin for such a project ever to prove a success; and I must tell you frankly that, so far as I can judge, those of your countrymen who cultivate the goddess of Fashion seem to value the natural beauties of their own country too slightly to authorize any speculator coming here for any such purpose as that you mention."

"My countrymen, cousin Hugh? Remember that the blood that is in your veins is Irish, and learn to call yourself an Irishman too."

"Under your favour, no!" replied Hugh. "Two generations of my family owe their origin to England, and every day of my life teaches me more highly to value the proud privilege of being able to call myself an Englishman. Not for worlds

would I renounce that privilege. My mother was an Englishwoman : she lies in an English grave."

As the young man spoke these words his dark eyes flashed and his form seemed to dilate. The Lieutenant looked on with surprise ; doubtless he thought that Hugh's chances of succeeding to the rich pastures and arable lands of Carrig Desmond were being reduced to a minimum. The Squire, too, seemed struck with astonishment. Hitherto Hugh's demeanour had been calm and undemonstrative, but as he stood there, with his eyes fixed almost with an angry gleam on Maurice's countenance, his vehement protest afforded the Squire some indication of his cousin's character.

"Heigho !" he said ; " for an Englishman you are the most patriotic I ever encountered, I do verily believe. Few of your countrymen are so glowing and fervent in their devotion to their country."

"I think you are mistaken there, cousin Maurice," said Hugh. "I am not much of a politician, to be sure, and I would rather, much rather, occupy the lowliest station in society than climb to place and power by sacrificing my individuality, and by consenting to re-echo the catch-words of Party. I am sure that Englishmen do not love their country the less because they are not always protesting how much they love it, or posing before the world as would-be heroes and martyrs for their country's sake."

"Hugh, my boy," said the Squire, "give me your hand ! By St. Kevin, you are right, and I admire your frankness ! Lieutenant,"—and the Squire looked cautiously about him as he spoke,— "I am ashamed to say that I would not dare to question the motives of our Irish agitators, no, sir, not even here in my own garden. Bedad ! Father Lawrence is a warm Nationalist, and, between ourselves, a word from him would soon put a dividing wedge between me and my tenants. See, there is my nephew down there in what we call the Broad Walk, reading his office. He has been transferred from his former diocese, and is now a curate in the village beyond. Heaven knows why he came here, as the O'Ruarcs are all Wicklow people,—you know my poor wife was his Reverence's aunt. Heroes and martyrs ! Ha ! ha ! By St. Kevin, some folks find martyrdom in the nineteenth century a stepping-stone to influence and fortune ! See, his Reverence is looking this way,—bedad, he has finished his office, and here he comes."

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In person, the Rev. Father Lawrence O'Ruarc was about five feet six inches in height. Like the majority of his cloth, he was a trifle pursy and rotund, though only about twenty six years old. His complexion reminded one of mottled soap, and, despite the care and assiduity with which he stropped his razor every morning, he was never able by the most dexterous shaving to free his cheeks and upper lip from the bluish tinge left behind by his beard in protest against its removal. His face was a massive one, the long, square lower jaw and prominent chin indicating much resolution and force of character. His eyes were black as those of Hugh's wilome spiritual friend, Mr. Catt, but, unlike the Bryanite preacher, Father O'Ruarc's glance did not wander hither and thither like Noah's dove in quest of a resting-place. On the contrary, he was in the habit of rivetting a man with his eyes, while he seemed to be taking a mental appraisement and inventory of his character and capacity. He was attired in the ordinary soutane and biretta, but in walking his strides seemed to be taken in protest against the trammelling cassock.

Father O'Ruarc had been present the preceding evening at the arrival of the visitors, and also at breakfast this morning. He had already analyzed Lieutenant Wallace,—indeed that gallant officer's nature was as transparent as water, so that he found little difficulty in the operation. With Hugh, however, he had not been quite so successful, and his Reverence was far too astute to endeavour to hide his discomfiture from himself. He was really a most ambitious man, and having long ago foreseen the turn of the tide which was about to sweep away old landmarks and revolutionize Ireland, he had already, as far as it was possible for a priest to do so, identified himself with the popular party. His own father was a small landlord in Wicklow, and a perfervid Nationalist, and Father Lawrence was resolved to use his energies and influence to the utmost to induce his uncle Maurice to devise his estates to his brother-in-law, unless, indeed, it appeared that Hugh Desmond was made of plastic material capable of being so moulded and impressed by himself, Father Lawrence O'Ruarc, as to become a stepping-stone for the realization of the priest's ambition.

"Uncle Maurice," said his Reverence, as he joined the party, "if you have made no other arrangements for the day, shall be glad to show Cousin Hugh,—you must allow me to

call you cousin,—and Lieutenant Wallace the chapel at Inniscarra and the presbytery. You will find Father Tom, the administrator, a fine fellow, what Cockney novelists would call a typical Irish priest."

Our hero bowed his acknowledgments, and said: "I am much obliged to you, Father O'Ruarc; I am wholly at my cousin's disposal and yours, although I think the Squire said something at breakfast about going through his covers with the keeper."

"We are rather late for shooting to-day, I fear," said the Squire, "so I propose that we all accept Lawrence's invitation. You will find our country roads too much for such thin shoes, however, so if you have any stouter ones among your luggage you will do well to put them on."

Accompanied by Sheela, the Squire's favourite hound, the party soon started for Inniscarra, the hamlet or village where the chapel was situated. Despite the mud, of which there was an abundance, the walk was a pleasant one, the road winding between the farms or holdings of the Squire's tenantry. The farm-houses, however, were but a superior kind of cabins, and Hugh could not avoid comparing them with the tidy, neat, picturesque cottages of the Devonshire labourers. The pigs, also, instead of being confined to the sty or the meadow, were rather too ubiquitous, as though they presumed a good deal upon the consciousness of their importance as factors in promoting the paying of rent. A steady walk of half an hour brought them to the village. Here, indeed, both Hugh and the Lieutenant were agreeably surprised at the evidences of thrift and solid comfort that greeted them on all sides. Besides the shops,—all well stocked and well ordered,—there were two schools,—one belonging to the "Christian Brothers," the other National; and everything went to show that the little community was prosperous and contented. The Roman Catholic chapel and the Protestant church almost faced each other, the latter being by far the more ecclesiastical in appearance.

"The Earl of Sherbourne owns nearly all the country around here," said the Squire, "and I am bound to say he is a most excellent landlord, better, I fear, than a native Irishman would be. His lordship's agent is pretty strict with regard to fences and hedges and farm buildings generally, but the tenantry have weathered the depression of the last few years

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as well as any in Ireland, and I do not think they will demand a reduction unless the agitators should turn their attention this way. To be sure, one never knows what may happen, and there is a grocer in the town,—a fellow named Shine, who made money in America,—who seems bent on mischief.”

“Indeed?” said Mr. Wallace, “but why should he do so? Surely his interest as a tradesman lies rather on the side of peace and order?”

“Sir,” replied the Squire, “we are being justly punished for our own wickedness. Besides selling their country’s Parliament to Pitt and Castlereagh, the nobility and gentry of Ireland have basely, criminally, neglected their duty to the country and the people. Since the forty-shilling freeholders were disfranchised, the privileged classes have had nothing to gain from the people but the rent upon which they live. In the meantime, England has widened the foundations of popular liberty, and the Irish peasantry have shared the gain. Like fatuous imbeciles, our gentry have allied themselves to a doomed cause, making their mere temporary, pecuniary welfare their sole aim and object. Therefore, Lieutenant, they are doomed. But as the people must have leaders, and as the necessity always provides the men, we find a class of professional politicians is being formed, and,—unless I am mistaken,—this Pat Shine is one of them.”

“True for you, Uncle Maurice,” said Father Lawrence, who had listened attentively to this exposition, “but all this is the most natural thing in life. Our gentry,—Catholic no less than Protestant,—have proved themselves *omadhauns*, upon whom the lessons of history are wasted and thrown away. The professional politicians know the necessities of the country, and if they themselves profit by their agitation who shall grudge them the profit? Sure we know that the labourer is deserving of his reward. Our nobility and gentry have chosen to play the part of Sisyphus; they are trying to roll the old rock of feudalism up hill, and they must take the consequences. In due time, when the Church is convinced that the aspirations of the people are legitimate, she will throw her influence into the scale, and you will then see the professional politicians will be restrained and that the restoration of Ireland’s liberty will not mean the inauguration of an era of licence.”

“Pardon me,” observed Hugh, “but it seems to me, Father O’Ruarc, that history teaches us that too sudden

innovation, like jealousy, is sometimes accustomed to make the meat it feeds on. In all such crises it is difficult to say to the flowing tide, Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther. Was it not Ireton who exclaimed, while dying at Limerick, that he loved renouncing? Who can say what would happen if the Protestants of the North should ever range themselves on the side of Irish Nationalism? Depend upon it, that in that case, should any of the professional politicians turn restive and form a coalition Radical party, the Church would find it somewhat difficult to restrain them, as the cry of No priestly dictation! would be a powerful lever in the hands of demagogy."

"Bravo, cousin!" said the Squire; "faith, for a young man who dislikes politics, you seem to me to be able to look ahead beyond many who profess to know all about it. However, here we are at the chapel, and see, by good luck there is Father Tom."

Father Tom Cahill was the parish priest, or administrator, and he was really, as described by the curate, a fine fellow. A man of imposing presence, his face shone with jollity and good humour, and he was the best loved man within a circle of fifty miles. The Squire having introduced his visitors, and expressed a desire that they should see the chapel, Father Tom led the way thither. Our hero, who was the last to enter, noticed that the Lieutenant dipped his hand into the piscina and crossed himself with the blessed water; Father Tom, who was courteously holding the swinging door open, was the only member of the party to observe Hugh's neglect of this ceremony. A look of surprise passed over his features, but of course he made no other manifestation. There was little to interest the two strangers in the little chapel, and therefore the party were soon on their way to the presbytery.

"Since you will not dine with me," said the priest, "I suppose I must be content with having ye to lunch, so come along."

"If you have no important business, Father Tom," said the Squire, "calling you elsewhere, I insist on your coming up to Carrig Desmond for dinner. Remember, we dine at five; may we look for you?"

"Certainly, I shall be most happy. Maurice, my boy,"—and Father Tom took the Squire by the button, while the two fell into the rear,—"I thought you said that your cousin had become a Catholic."



"Why, so I did, Father Tom ; sure, do you not know that he is an organist at that place of the Earl of Guisborough, who is as Catholic as the Pope. Why do you ask me that ?"

"Oh, nothing, Maurice," said the priest ; "but faith, he's a fine-looking fellow. He comes from the ould stock, and reminds me very much of,—arrah ! what am I talking of ?"

"I know, Father Tom," said the Squire, "of my poor boy Owen you would say. I was struck with the resemblance at first, only he is not so eager and lively as Owen, which is but natural, for my poor boy was no great hand at books,—preferring horses and sporting,—while my cousin there is a match for the best in Maynooth. But, Father Tom, you and I have been friends from boyhood, so I may just as well tell you a secret : the boy prides himself on being English ; he would never be content to live here as I have lived."

"Do not distress yourself, Maurice, about that. Sure he is too young yet to know his own mind ; in time he will become a cosmopolitan, whose maxim has always been *ubi bene, ibi patria*. Depend upon it that in time Lawrence there will make him a thorough-paced Nationalist,—you know the saying applied to our Norman barons, 'more Irish than the Irish themselves.'"

The Squire shook his head doubtfully, and the two quickened their walk in order to overtake the others. After lunching with Father Tom, they inspected what he called his museum,—he being something of an antiquarian,—looked over his library, and then, after the Squire had reminded the priest that he was to dine at the castle, they set out on their return to Carrig Desmond. Just as they cleared the village and were fairly out on the open road, they were met by a man in a dog-cart.

"Here comes our local politician," said the Squire. "This is Pat Shine, the fellow I told you of just now. He is not a particularly good-looking specimen of the Irish American, but I suppose we are all just as God made us."

"Father Lawrence will perhaps say that the Devil sometimes mars the handiwork," said Hugh. "But what a wretched driver the man is ; really he seems quite unable to pull up his horse."

This last remark was occasioned by the awkward method taken by the politician to arrest the progress of the horse, a

method chiefly remarkable for the persistent tugging of Mr. Shine at the off rein.

"Heave to, ye beggar," shouted Mr. Shine; "damn me if ever I saw such yawing and jibing. Heave-to, I say! Pardon, Father Lawrence,—my sarvice to you, Squire,—but this old staggeen is a bit tender in the mouth, and the Devil himself could not keep her from luffing, I think."

"Good day to you, Shine!" said the priest, while the Squire curtly nodded, "this is the first time I have seen you driving."

"And if your Riverence iver sees me trying it again, I give you lave to excommunicate me. Bedad, I had business wid Mr. Rolf, the Earl's agent, and I borrowed the loan of Tim Prendergast's mare and dog-cart. Say, Squire, I rather guess you've heered of the resolution taken by some of Sherborne's people, eh?"

"No, Mr. Shine," replied the Squire, "I do not think I have."

"Faith, then, it's loikely ye will soon, so I may as well be first wid the news. They are going to ask for a reduction of rents, or else for an allowance for the shortage in crops."

"Have you talked with Mr. Rolf on the subject?" inquired the priest, rightly divining that Shine had been deputed to conduct the preliminary negotiations with the agent.

"Faith, I did that same, Father Lawrence, and very much astounded the ould gentleman. I guess no man was ever so much taken aback. He undertook, however, to send the notice to his lordship, and we can only wait for the answer and prepare for the worst."

"Prepare for the worst?" said the Squire, struck by the significant tone in which the remark was made, "why what on earth do you mean? If all our landlords were like Lord Sherborne there would —"

"Would be peace and contintmint in all the country, Squire," said the fellow, interrupting the speaker without scruple. "Yes, that is so,—bad 'cess to the spalpeens who care only when their own skillet is full! Well, we shall see about your good landlord when his pocket is threatened. They do say that all these bloody aristycrats are tarred wid the same brush: but, sure, we shall see. Faix, an eviction or two would do good in this part of the country; maybe we shall have some next winter. Well, good day to ye, Father Law-

rence ! so long, gentlemen ! Hurroo, ye baste, full-and-by, off ye go ! hurroo !”

“There,” said the Squire, as Shine drove off, “there you have the only specimen of the genus *Agitator* to be found in the district. How do you like him ?”

“Not much, I confess,” replied Hugh, “if, as I suspect, this ill-looking fellow has plotted the mischief of which he seems to boast.”

“Ill-looking ? mischief ?” said the priest ; “cousin, it will do no harm to caution you not to talk too freely about popular and favourite leaders. Our people are not over-patient or discriminating in such things, and, sure, sometimes walls have ears.”

“Here, however, we have no walls,” returned Hugh, “and surely not even in Ireland can the groundwork of society be so undermined that gentlemen need to suppress their thoughts lest some eavesdropper or talebearer should be within hearing ?”

The mottled face flushed, and an angry reply seemed on the point of leaping from the lips of the priest. He contrived, however, to restrain himself, but the black eyes glared ominously as they returned Hugh’s somewhat contemptuous glance. As for the Squire, he looked troubled at the turn taken by the conversation.

“The fact is,” he said, “that Pat Shine’s face does not look well without whiskers, and with that rusty old stubble on his lip. Pat thinks he looks like a Yankee, and he uses ‘I guess,’ ‘You bet,’ and other phrases which he supposes will give him what I may call an American flavour.”

“He seems to me to talk like a sailor,” said the Lieutenant, “do you know if he has been to sea ?”

“Divil a doubt of it, Mr. Wallace,” answered Maurice with a laugh, “it is hard to say what he has not been ; but I once heard him own to having been born in Waterford. The saints forbid that he should ever become Prime Minister, that is all I say of him.”

When dressing for dinner, Mr. Wallace came into Hugh’s room and sat down.

“Excuse me, my friend,” he said, “but just as I was struggling with this confounded collar I recollected the fellow. Yes, I could swear to him anywhere.”

"Swear to whom?" inquired Desmond, utterly unable to understand the Lieutenant's observation.

"Why, to that fellow Shine—Pat Shine, the rascal we saw in the dog-cart near Inniscarra."

"Surely," said Hugh, "you never saw him before, did you? I thought you were never in America."

"I have been to the Windward and the Leeward Islands and to Jamaica, but never on the American continent. I did not see him there, however, but in Constantinople. It is not a long story; I can tell it before you are ready to put on your coat. In 1854 we were lying in the Golden Horn,—I belonged to the *Tiger* then,—having been badly mauled by a squall in the Gulf of Bourgas. One morning I had gone in the cutter to a transport on some affair of our first lieutenant. I ordered my coxswain to drop astern of the ship, for there were two or three launches alongside the transport, and a lot of big Turkish labourers or porters were transferring heavy bales and boxes from the ship to the boats. I had heard such marvellous stories of the porters of Constantinople and the heavy burdens they could carry, that I was very much interested in watching them. They were certainly very strong fellows. Some of the men of the transport, English-like, were making themselves merry by passing scurrilous remarks and jests about at the expense of the Ottomans, but as the porters could not understand what was said, there was no harm done and Jack enjoyed his laugh. At last, as one of the porters was approaching the gangway with a particularly heavy box on his shoulder, one of the sailors pulled the man's fez down in front, covering his eyes, and the Turk was under the necessity of putting down the burden and adjusting his head piece. Then he shouldered the box again and went down the gangway to the launch. On his return I saw him look at the sailor from the corner of his eyes in a very peculiar manner. He was going on toward the main hatchway, however, quietly and calmly, when the same sailor snatched at the tassel of the fez, and, accidentally no doubt, struck the porter on the ear. Of course, all the bystanders began to guffaw. Very much to their surprise, however, the porter suddenly threw his arms free from the tunic or vest he was wearing, and in a moment he stood before Jack in what was unmistakably an attitude of defiance. I assure you, I was never more surprised in my life.

"'Blow me, mates!' said the sailor, 'if this dirty beggar an't wanting to fight. Get along, you lubber!'

"The lubber's only reply was a stinging slap with the palm of his hand on Jack's face which made the sailor swear volubly, and in a second he, too, was stripped for action. At this juncture the master-at-arms came up, but when he saw the ship's officers and myself laughing, where we stood on the quarter-deck, he held aloof for a few minutes. To say the truth, we were all amazed at seeing a Turk quite as eager for pugilism as any orthodox Christian could be. Well, to make my story a short one,—I see you are waiting,—they fought about five hotly contested rounds, when the sailor acknowledged himself defeated. 'Yes, mates,' he said, spitting the blood from his mouth, 'I've had enough. It seems queer to be whopped by a blasted Turk; but if any of you want a go at him, you are welcome.' And now for the cream of the story. Just as Jack said this, the porter had got inside his tunic again. Looking around on the group of astonished sailors he said, 'Arrah, if any of yez want a turn wid me I'll not deny ye.' The foolish fellow had blundered at the last moment, as he soon found out when the master-at-arms put his hand on his shoulder and said, 'I arrest you as a deserter from Her Majesty's service!' Desmond, as sure as I am alive, that porter was Pat Shine."

"Indeed," replied Hugh, "are you really quite convinced of that? It seems so very extraordinary a thing that you should find the hero of your story twenty years after in such a place as this and in such a character."

"I grant that it does," returned the Lieutenant, "but I am not mistaken. The fellow was a deserter from the flagship. They subsequently discovered dozens of such renegades in the employ of the Greek contractors in Stamboul. The week after his arrest I saw Shine at the gratings; oh, yes, I can swear to his identity. I have been thinking that, should Destiny ever waft you back here, and should this same beetle-browed priest whom you treat so cavalierly strike hands with the 'Agitator' to do you or your cousin any injury, you may be able to turn what I have told you to good account. Ha! there's the dinner bell; old Dan tolls it like a village sexton. I like that Father Tom, but the Squire is a fine old trump—an Irish gentleman of the old school. Come on!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH FATHER TOM MAKES PUNCH AND HEARS A  
CONFESSION.

DINNER was over, and the gentlemen were enjoying themselves "across the walnuts and the wine." Father Tom, having already demonstrated that he was an excellent trencherman, looked extremely gratified when old Dan, the butler, placed a couple of well-filled decanters on the table, flanking each with tankards of hot water and a sugar-bowl. Dan had performed this duty for more than forty years, and he was practically the major-domo at the castle, the house-keeper, a little lame old lady, being seldom visible after her morning report to and consultation with her master, the Squire.

"Arrah, Dan, *ma bouchal*!" said the administrator, placing his right hand lovingly on one of the decanters, as though he were about to favour it with a benediction, "remember that ye have a sprig of the ould stock at Carrig Desmond to-day, and do the right thing in honour of the occasion. None of your Dublin stuff to-day, Dan."

"Faix, Father Tom," returned the butler, "I have not forgotten it; more by token that your Reverence is too good a judge for me to give ye a drop under three year old. Sure, Father Tom, it is Murphy's best and ouldest, and his honour there will tell ye that it has been in the cellar a dozen years."

"It looks the right thing, Dan," said the priest; "yes, it has the true golden tint of the *aqua celestis*. Mr. Wallace, as a sailor, you ought to know the virtues of hot punch, but perhaps you are not quite so familiar with the orthodox method of concocting nectar, as prepared by Hebe for the immortal gods. As for the young fellow there, I hardly know if we ought to introduce this divine potation to a person of tender years. Maurice, man, since you are the host, upon your head be the responsibility, but, faith, your cousin does not look at all apprehensive."

The Squire and Hugh smiled, the latter declaring his perfect willingness to encounter the peril, while the Lieutenant said:

"Nectar, eh, Father Cahill? Well, I have heard of that



celestial potation often enough, and I shall be glad to taste it, I think."

"Yes," said Hugh, "but, Father Tom, where is your Hebe? Is not her presence essential?"

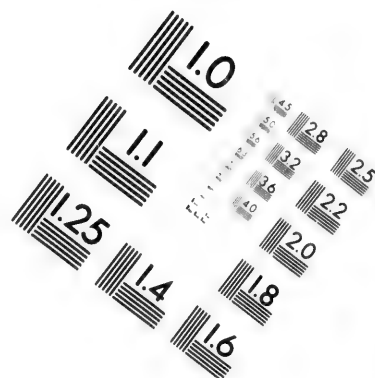
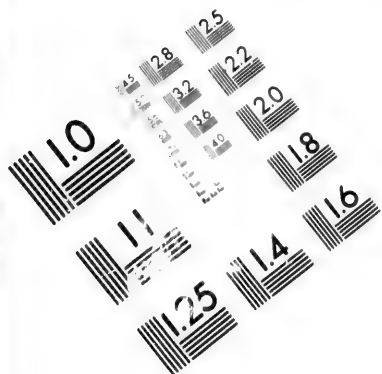
"Not at all, my boy, not at all. Sure, if you remember your Homer, you will recollect that Vulcan once passed round the double-cup to his white-armed mother and the other deities."

"Yes," replied our hero, "but what of the *asbestos gelos*, the unquenchable laughter with which they rewarded his ministrations?"

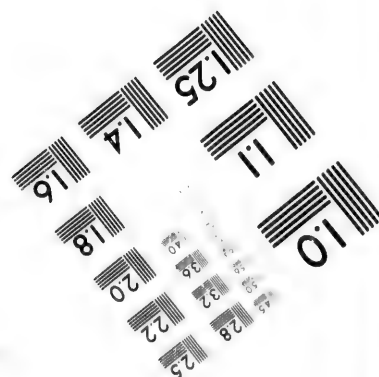
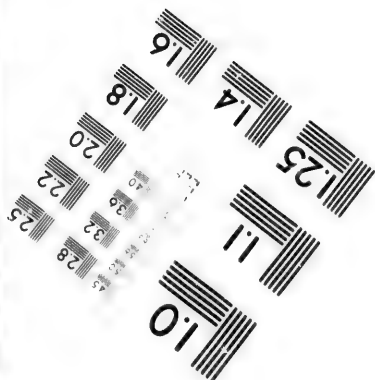
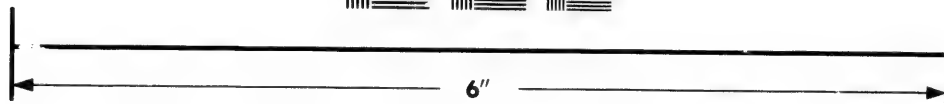
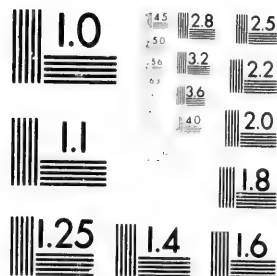
"I long ago satisfied myself that there we have a false reading," said Father Tom. "Where all the world reads *gelos*, laughter, I read *dipsos*, thirst, with a neuter adjective, which greatly improves the sense, I think."

"Father Tom," said the Squire, "we have not all of us been to Maynooth. I think Lieutenant Wallace, like myself, does not quite see the point of your joke, so perhaps you will be after explaining it to us."

"Why, you see, Maurice, Vulcan, or Hephaistos, was lame from his birth, and was as awkward as a cow with a musket, which no doubt made him seem a clumsy fellow in Olympus. But my emendation would make the passage read something like this: 'And then unquenchable thirst was raised among the gods when they saw Hephaistos passing round the whiskey.' But I beg your pardon, Lieutenant dear, sure I ought to have known better than to keep you waiting so long. Well, look now; into this big glass or tumbler I pour a certain quantity, —just as much as I like,—of the hot water, to which I add the sugar according to taste. Into this wine glass I pour the whiskey; and look you, it is essential that the golden liquor, the *uisge beatha*,—water of life, *aqua vita*, it means the same in all languages,—should be level with the top of the wine-glass. If it be only half a millimetre below the lip of the glass, the mixer is thereby marked out as a recreant and apostate to the cause of Good Drinking. And now comes the bridal, the nuptials, the true test of the adept in this glorious alchemy. Firmly, but dexterously, I tip the wineglass over the tumbler, the two elements rapturously commingle, assisted thereto by a twirl or two of the little glass stirring rod,—and lo! there you have punch made *secundum artem*, a potation fit for a king."

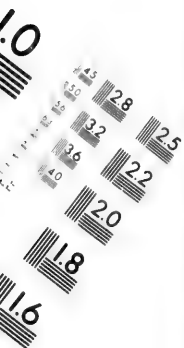


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"And now, gentlemen," said the Squire, "that Father Tom's experiment is over, let us all do the like. Lawrence, I will thank you for that decanter and the hot water. Lieutenant, are you anything of a horseman?"

"I can only reply," said Mr. Wallace, "in the words of the man who was asked if he could play the fiddle,—I do not know, for I have never tried. Of course I have been on horseback, but that was so long ago that I have forgotten when it was. But why do you ask, Squire?"

"Why, the Innishogue Hunt will meet near the castle to-morrow, and I can mount you well if you care to go. I have a filly,—we call her *Nora*,—that Mike Delaney broke in that would just suit you, she goes so easy that you might sleep in the saddle."

"Thank you very much," said the Lieutenant, "but a sailor on horseback is an incongruity, and I do not care very much for hunting."

"And you, cousin, are you reluctant to trust yourself on the back of an Irish hunter, eh?"

"Not at all," replied Hugh, "I will venture on *Nora* with pleasure. I have often envied others the excitement of the hunt, and I really think I should like to go with you to-morrow, if for no other reason yet possibly to ascertain whether or not this pleasure, like so many others, disappoints the anticipation. You say the filly is gentle? for I have to confess that I am not aware of having been on horseback since I was a boy."

"Gentle as a lamb," said the Squire. "The boy who broke her in, Mike Delaney, was a sort of stable-helper or under-groom here, but he was the best hand I ever had. Faith, the creatures seemed to love him."

"And what has become of Mike?" inquired the Lieutenant; "has he gone to seek his fortune as a jockey?"

"To tell the truth," said the Squire, "the boy once forgot himself, and treated Father O'Ruarc with gross disrespect. He refused to apologise, and I had no alternative but to dismiss him. He went off to London, I believe."

"I merely spoke to him concerning his Easter duty," said Father Lawrence, "and he turned on me with the remark that I was not his spiritual director. I threatened him with my stick, and he brandished a horsewhip in my face and dared me to strike him. Such a thing never before occurred in Carlow, I think, and if Uncle Maurice had not turned the

scoundrel away I should have gone to the presbytery at Inniscarra."

"Indeed, Father O'Ruarc," said Hugh, "I used to think that the stories of the Irish clergy coercing their flocks by means of their shillelaghs were all pure inventions."

"Not wholly so, my friend," said Father Tom, "but, faith, we only drive them for their own good. Sometimes, however, they are too many for us. A Munster priest once told me that previous to the great Fenian outbreak along somewhere in '64 and '65, he was a curate in a garrison town on the Blackwater. The bishop and his clergy were loyal men,—faith, their mouths were open for sops from the British Parliament, as they have been any time since Emancipation,—and it was next to impossible for any of the boys to get absolution in that district, which, by the same token, was entirely overrun with Fenians and so-called veterans of the great civil war in America. Bad 'cess to them for veterans anyhow! sure a regiment of British soldiers would be enough for a million of them."

"I beg your pardon, Father Tom," said the Lieutenant, "but in that I cannot agree with you. I have heard the valour of the Irish-American soldiers commended too highly, and that, too, by military men, ever to depreciate them as you are doing."

"True for you, Lieutenant," answered the administrator, "but the fellows I allude to never had been soldiers; sure, they were the offscourings of the slums of New York."

"Daws in borrowed feathers the majority of them, I fancy," observed the Squire, "still, there were exceptions."

"Exceptions, indeed!" exclaimed Father O'Ruarc with much vehemence, "I should think there were exceptions. I beg leave to tell you, Father Tom, that in that ill-starred movement there were as much devotion, honest purpose, and self-sacrifice as among the Spartans of Thermopylæ. Exceptions indeed!"

"Nobody said to the contrary, Father Lawrence," said the administrator, "but so far as I know the sacrifice was almost entirely confined to our own deluded peasantry. Ill-starred movement,—and why was it ill-starred? Because it seems impossible for Irishmen to be true to each other; because vows, protestations, and oaths avail but little as guarantees of truth and fidelity; because you will always find traitors eager

and anxious to secure the blood-money. However, let me finish my story. In the town I was speaking of there was one priest, a Father Hickey, who scorned to do police work for the Government. When the boys discovered that he, when hearing confessions, put no awkward questions about secret societies, it was surprising to see how hard he was worked every Saturday afternoon, and—begorra! but it's the queer story!—when refused absolution at one box, the boys found it easy to obtain it at another. It's a queer world, so it is."

"What surprises me," said Mr. Wallace, "is that men engaged in such desperate work should be so intent on the practices,—I mean sacraments,—of religion. Do you know that it seems to me that a strictly religious man would be unlikely to make a good revolutionist?"

"In the modern sense of the word you are right, sir," said Father O'Ruarc, "because the word revolution has come to be identified with godless impiety and hatred of the true faith. Ireland will have nothing to do with this; and depend upon it that we shall live to see the revolution we desire accomplished with the Church's sanction and effected under her benediction. However, the half-hour is gone, I declare; I must go to vespers. Father Tom, I may make free with your car, I suppose?"

"Of course, Father Lawrence; sure Tim has it ready, and he will drive you to the chapel in fifteen minutes. Tell him to be easy with the creature's mouth."

"To vespers?" inquired the Lieutenant, "may I request the favour of accompanying you, Father O'Ruarc!—that is, if the car will hold another?"

"Hold another? why yes, sir, it will hold three more, and I shall be glad of your company."

Soon after the departure of the jaunting car, the Squire, Father Tom, and Hugh betook themselves to the library. In reply to our hero's evident surprise at finding so large a collection of books, the Squire observed:

"Many of them are oid,—a great number secondhand volumes gathered up at sales. It has been, since Owen's death, my greatest pleasure to sit here; and I have come to love the books almost as though they were living things. Cousin Hugh, I intend that these and all my real property shall one day be yours, and I find pleasure in the reflection that this collection will not be dissipated."



Thus directly and pathetically appealed to, our hero recognized that the moment had arrived when honour called him to reciprocate the confidence reposed in him.

"Cousin," he said, "if you will take a chair near me, I will endeavour to clear up, as far as possible, my present position,—I mean, to give an explanation which your goodness and generosity of intention demand of me. With your permission, Father Cahill, as your lifelong friend and, I suppose, counsellor and confidant, is welcome to hear my statement. I am confident that I shall have no reason to regret what I am about to do ; but, at all events, however your feelings toward me may be affected by what I have to say, I feel that it is my duty to give this explanation."

"Why, my dear boy," said the worthy old gentleman, "you look as serious as though you had been robbing the Bank of England. However, let us hear what you have to say. You are right in trusting my old friend Tom Cahill, here. His honour is incorruptible, his integrity as firm as the Rock of Cashel. Sit down, Father Tom."

"It is my belief," said the priest, "that your young cousin there has either been reading one of our modern three-volume novels or else he has been secretly married."

"No, indeed, Father Tom," answered Hugh, "I have only lost my situation at the Earl of Guisborough's."

"Lost your situation," exclaimed the Squire, "faugh! is that all? Why, Tom, upon my conscience, I began to fear there was a woman in the case. So that is all, is it?"

"Not quite all, dear sir," said our hero, "there is a lady in the case ; I suppose I must acknowledge the fact"

"My dear cousin," said the Squire, "for the sake of your own peace and future life, I hope you have not entered into a hasty, ill-judged marriage."

"No, cousin, I have not," answered Hugh, "I am as yet only engaged, not married."

"And to whom, my lad, if I may venture to inquire?" asked the priest. "Pardon me, if I venture too far, but your frank confidence encourages me, and I am interested in your welfare."

"Not to an inferior, I trust?" said the Squire. "Is it this engagement that is troubling you, Hugh, my boy?"

"On this subject, cousin Maurice,—at least for the present,—my lips are sealed. I will say, however, that upon this

score you need have no apprehension. The lady who has given me her affection is far above me in station,—indeed, I think she is superior to me in all things,—and for her sake I wish most earnestly that both in natural and artificial endowments my qualifications could be augmented.”

“Whew!” ejaculated, or rather whistled Father Tom, “millia murder! is that the way the wind blows? Maurice, my boy, wait a bit!—ha! by Saint Kevin, I think I see it all; but honour bright. Go on with your confession, Mr. Hugh Desmond; by the powers, if my guess is near the mark, ye are a bold and a lucky fellow.”

Our hero reddened up to his brow, for the eyes of the priest and the Squire were turned to the wall, where a “Peerage” stood conspicuous enough and almost within reach of their hands.

“Well,” he said, “there is but little more of my confession, as you term it; although, my good friends, I am painfully aware that what I have to say will probably lead to our estrangement. But it must be said,—my honour and manhood demand it.”

“In the name of King Malachi and his pigs, boy, tell it without further preamble!” cried Father Tom. “Bedad, Maurice? I am all in a tremble! Faith, I need a drop of the water of life to ease my nerves, for I am seriously afraid that your young cousin has been after assassinating the Pope.”

“No, cousin Maurice,” said Hugh, addressing the Squire, “I have not done that. The fact is, however, that I am no longer a Catholic.”

“What?” roared the priest, “no longer a Catholic! Then what the divil are ye,—sure you have not gone back to Protestantism, have ye?”

“Explain yourself, cousin,” said the Squire, looking somewhat pale and agitated as he spoke; “explain yourself. No longer a Catholic?”

“My friend and relative,” answered our hero, “I have already learned to respect you, and believe me that I am grieved to wound your feelings in this manner. But I must be true to myself; not only am I not a Catholic, I am no longer a Christian.”

“Not a Christian?” said the priest,—the Squire was looking intently on the floor and did not raise his eyes,—“then maybe ye are a Mohammedan or a Buddhist, young gentleman?”

"Neither, I think," observed our hero; "but I suppose that I may call myself a Rationalist or a Freethinker. This has come to me almost, I may say, against my will; I have fought against it, prayed against it, aye, even wrestled against it. Not so long ago I confidently said of the Catholic Church, as the Gospel tells us it was said to Peter, *Upon this rock my faith is securely grounded, never to be disturbed*. I can no longer make that declaration. On the contrary, I am compelled to say that, be the end what it may, I am determined to test any and everything, every creed, every institution, every pretension, every system by the light of Reason. I know not, I dread not, whither it may lead me, and I will follow it wheresoever it may direct. At present I am but as a toddling child, or a groping, puzzled wanderer in a dense forest. But my feet are sure, I feel that I am on solid ground. Reason, untrammelled, unfettered, is now the rock of my trust, and *upon this rock I repose my confidence*. Of course, I know that all this is purely my own affair; but, cousin, in your first communication to me you expressed your gratification at my having become a Catholic; and no doubt your expressed good will and benevolent intention toward me have been and are more or less coloured and strengthened by the conviction that our religion was one and the same."

A brief silence followed our hero's declaration. The Squire, though looking toward his cousin, seemed to be in a reverie; the priest, however, fixed a curious gaze upon the young man. When Father Tom broke the silence he spoke in a very low tone:

"Religion, religion: always religion. 'Again, who is there whose mind does not shrink into itself with fear of the gods, whose limbs do not cower in terror, when the parched earth rocks with the appalling stroke, and rattlings run through the great heaven?'"

Hugh Desmond looked toward the administrator in astonishment, for it really almost seemed to him that the priest translated the lines with approbation of their tendency.

"I see, Father Cahill, that you have read Lucretius," he observed, "and you must know his answer to the question he himself puts: 'What cause has spread over great nations the worship of the divinities of the gods, and filled towns with altars, and led to the performance of stated sacred rites,—rites now in fashion on solemn occasions and in solemn

places,—from which even now is implanted in mortals a shuddering awe which raises new temples of the gods over the whole earth, and prompts men to crowd them on festive days!”

Instead of directly replying, the priest apparently preferred to quote from Lucretius,—now, however, looking up at the Squire, who was standing with his hands clasped behind him, and who was evidently waiting with interest to hear what Father Tom would say. Still speaking softly the latter went on :

“ ‘O hapless race of men ! when that they charged the gods with such acts and coupled with them bitter wrath ! what groanings did they then beget for themselves, what wounds for us, what tears for our children’s children !’ So, young man, you are a sceptic, an unbeliever, are you ? Bedad, if ye were a trifle less candid and outspoken,—the fault of your English strain that same,—ye would make a good bishop, I’m thinking. Maurice, just turn the key in the door there, so that we may not be interrupted. That will do ; now take your seat while I tell this young infidel a story. Something like twenty-five years ago it was,—but I will begin in the way of the fairy tales, ‘Once upon a time.’ Well, my young friend, once upon a time there were two brothers. The elder of the two was a bright and gifted youth, a born genius, if ever there was one. Their parents were pretty well-to-do, the father being a prosperous farmer owning,—a rare thing in this country,—his own land. The elder boy,—the bright one,—was a great lover of books ; but his father was resolved to bring him up for a commercial career, and in due course he became an assistant in a village shop or store, and finally set up for himself in a small way in Dublin. The spirit within him, however, could not be stifled or repressed, so in spite of his business cares and general environment, he,—under a pseudonym,—became known throughout the Irish world as a poet capable of stirring the emotions of Irishmen to their centre. The other brother was not a genius ; faith, not by a long way ! but he would have made a good farmer. The father, however, had made up his mind that one of his boys should be priested,—and the more so because his wife had borne him another boy about the time I speak of, and by the same token that boy is now a man and the owner of the farm. The second boy did not desire to become a priest ; but he was sent to college. The daughter of a neighbouring farmer had

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grown very dear to that boy's heart. During his vacations they frequently met, and one evening they exchanged vows of love. Wish! 'tis a heart-breaking world, I think! Finally, when the boy had become a man, and his college course was completed, it was announced that he was to be sent to the Irish college in Paris, there to study theology and prepare for taking orders. On his knees he entreated his father to allow him to choose some other profession. He told him that he had not the vocation,—he told him all. The father, however, would not change his purpose, and at last he said, 'Tom, unless you follow the life I have chosen for you, your head shall be crowned with a father's curse!' Oh! it was awful."

It was easy for his hearers to divine that the administrator's narrative related to himself, that the experience was his own.

"Tom," said the Squire, "a portion of your story I knew long ago; but the girl,—surely you were not attached to Mary O'Farrel?"

"Hush! Maurice; let her name go unspoken by us for ever; but it was Mary, my first, my only love. Religion, or something that passed in its name, stepped between us, blighted my hopes, for years blasted the face of Nature to me, and broke her heart. Boy, boy!"—and Father Tom in his agitation seized Hugh's hand and grasped it spasmodically,— "I was present at her death-bed, in the execution of my priestly duty, and hear me and believe me when I say that not all the sacramental mummary that was ever invented since gifts were first given to win the gods gave to the dying one a tithe of the happiness given by the whispered assurance from my lips that I had never ceased to love,—aye, and to worship her. How different it all might have been! ah, but where's the use of talking? I have told you my story,—first, because I could not help it; secondly, because I honour and respect you for your manly courage; and lastly, because not all the Churches, Councils, and Popes that ever existed can prevent me from thinking and inquiring for myself. And there are many of us,—I knew a fellow, a Dean of Maynooth,—but never mind that. As to your cousin, the Squire there: ha, Maurice! sure it's an easy spiritual guide I have been to ye, eh?"

As with his island's sky, Father Cahill's clouds did not long continue to obscure his prevailing lightness of heart and good humour. The Squire, however, did not smile in reply, but

carefully selecting a key from his pocket he unlocked a drawer and drew forth two or three volumes.

"This," he said, "is the 'Vie de Jesus,' this the famous 'Essays and Reviews,' and this the first volume of Colenso's book. I have read them all, at first with trepidation, I confess. Therefore, Cousin, Hugh, if anything your confession, as you call it, has been a pleasant surprise to me, while it has revealed certain depths in my old friend Tom's character and nature that I never even suspected the existence of. Well, we understand each other, although at my age I cannot venture to defy public opinion."

"Why, Hugh, my friend," said the priest, "my profession is my profession, and there's an end of it. I have heard that no workman likes his trade, but few of them are able to manifest their likes and dislikes. As to public opinion, Maurice, you and I do not defy public opinion, because we are afraid of it. In our case, the fear which originally gave birth to the superstition is as dead as Strongbow, but the foolish dread of the world which we allow to restrain and repress our true selves is after all a pitiable thing. But unlock the door, and, if you like to keep your reading a secret from that plotting nephew of yours, lock your drawer again, for I hear Tim driving up the road. Faith, Tim can always be heard before he's visible. And now, friends, *vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*. According to Seneca, man is a rational animal, therefore I take it that we none of us feel the necessity of talking these matters over with Father Lawrence O'Ruarc."

While reflecting that night upon this conversation, Hugh Desmond endeavoured to decide whether the conduct of his friends in thus suppressing their convictions was altogether defensible. It was a difficult question to settle, inasmuch as the circumstances were peculiar. Subsequent experience, however, taught our hero that in modern Christendom men and women everywhere profess to acquiesce in a theory of existence which it is utterly impossible for them to use as the standard and rule of their lives. Even to himself, every man is an enigma, a mystery of the supreme cosmic power; while, to his fellow men, many a one whose probity is witnessed by the breadth of his phylacteries is little other than a living lie.



## CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH OUR HERO TWIRLS A SHILLELAGH.

IT was a cloudy morning, and the wind was from the south, —an ideal hunting morning. The Squire and Hugh were early at the meet, the former—as became a regular subscriber to the Hunt—being regularly attired in scarlet coat, white leather breeches, and top boots, the latter in garments less resplendent, as became an amateur. Hugh soon discovered that Nora merited the encomiums of her owner, and by strictly following the Squire's advice, he found himself much more at ease than he had anticipated, and able to observe the novel spectacle. Besides the members of the Hunt, there was a crowd of small farmers and persons of the middle class, all variously mounted, and a picturesquely ragged and enthusiastic following on foot. The huntsman, surrounded by his hounds, gave a brief nod and a flourish of his whip by way of salutation as the Squire came up, and soon after the field was put in motion over the wild, unenclosed heath lands to the west of the Inniscarra road. As they approached a covert about a mile from the castle the dogs gave cry, and amid a full-sounding chorus of "Tally-ho!" "Gone away!" and the wild halloo of those whom we may term the light infantry of the assemblage, the whole field swept forward behind the master of the Hunt. For a few minutes our hero thought he must inevitably part company with Nora, but his cousin whispered "Lean forward, my boy, and trust your weight to the stirrups!" Hugh did this, and found that the tendency to part company with the filly was considerably lessened, although he could not help thinking that, were Nora to stop suddenly, he himself would, in all probability, be thrown over her head. In this manner they rode over a rough common covered with heather and furze, which opened suddenly on a narrow strip of green pasture, through which the chalybeate brook which ran at the foot of Carrig-Desmond gently meandered. The brook was scarcely more than a yard in width, but to Hugh's inexperienced eye it was an object no less formidable than the Atlantic ocean. The hounds, in full cry, had passed over without wetting a hair, all save one laggard dog which the huntsman had reined in his horse to urge for-

ward. The lead was taken by a young man, in full costume, mounted on a powerful black horse. "Bravo, Dick!" shouted the Squire, as this person swept onward, gave his horse the rein, and cleared the brook like a flash. The rest of the field generally followed his example, among them Desmond and his cousin the Squire. How he held on it was impossible for our hero to bethink himself,—he was conscious that his cousin had gently touched Nora with the whip, that he himself involuntarily pressed his legs to the animal and constricted his muscles, and lo! the feat was accomplished.

"Well done, my boy!" said the Squire, his face in a glow with the exercise and radiant with satisfaction, "you are doing finely. However, take it coolly; I know every foot of the ground, and take my word for it, all those headstrong gentlemen who have forged ahead are bound to be thrown out soon."

"Thrown out?" inquired Hugh, "what do you mean? surely such excellent riders are not going to be thrown?"

"No, no," laughed his cousin, "not, exactly: 'thrown out' is what I may term the technical phrase for losing the hounds. In an easy stretch of country such as this, nearly all young hunters outride the dogs, and when the fox doubles they are temporarily thrown out of the hunt."

"I understand," answered Hugh, "but who was that fine-looking man who went to the front just now on the large black horse?"

"Oh, that was Dick Furlong, the Miller's son. The old man has made a pretty large fortune out of those large mills we can just see from the castle. The son, Dick, has an ambition to enter the charmed circle of the county gentry; he subscribes to the Hunt, and so on; and, faith, they tell me the heralds have, for value received, furnished Master Dick with a coat of arms, crest and motto."

"Indeed," said Hugh, "and do you know what the motto is?"

"No, indeed, coz," answered the Squire, "unless it is 'Eight furlongs make one mile.' However, Dick is a good fellow, an excellent fellow,—too good to bother himself with such trifles. Were the Queen to knight him to-morrow he would still be no nearer the object of his ambition, for our county families, though poor as Job,—at least some of them,—are as proud as Lucifer. I have heard it rumoured that Dick aspires to the

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hand of Miss Eva Burke ;—but listen ! 'gad I hear the music of the pack. Reynard is coming this way, as I said he would. Well, I shall have time to smoke a cigar,"—and the Squire began to smoke.

The cousins had drawn in their horses soon after crossing the brook, in the shade of a copse, nearly all the rest of the hunters pushing their way through after the hounds. Hugh was indescribably glad of the rest, the extraordinary shaking he had already received, together with the cramped position of his limbs, making him almost wish he had not ventured on horseback.

"And who is Eva Burke ? " he asked, after the Squire's cigar had been fairly lit.

"She passed us not long after Dick," replied Maurice ; "she was the first lady to cross the brook. She comes of a very old and distinguished family, the Norman De Burghos ; the estate is large, but terribly saddled with debt."

"I remember," said Hugh, "she sat her horse very gracefully, I think."

"You may say that," observed the Squire, "faith, there is no better horsewoman in Ireland. The young man who rode almost close to her bridle was young Cator,—another scion of a proud but impoverished house. The Cators are all bitter Orangemen,—fanatics of the deepest dye. In the time of the Famine, in '46 and '47, they were Soupers, that is, they only administered relief on condition that the recipients would attend the Protestant church and send their children to the Protestant school. The people fairly detest them, and no doubt they detest the people. Some years ago I had to use my authority as a magistrate to keep young Cator and my boy Owen from a breach of the peace."

"So you think that Mr. Furlong is in love with Miss Burke ? " inquired Hugh.

"I have heard that he admires her very much ; and perhaps he relies somewhat on his father's guineas :—the old miller is worth quite a hundred thousand pounds. But Dick is a Catholic, not over and above well educated, and the Burkes would laugh him to scorn. Moreover, Cator is in the way, and I would bet my horse that he will win the lady. But see, here they come ! By Jove, there is the fox ! Yoicks, tally-ho ! "

Like a whirlwind on they came, fox, hounds and hunters,

and the Squire, fairly carried away with excitement, put spurs to his horse and sped forward in the chase. For a minute or two Hugh watched them as they careered on to the left, encountering stone fences, gates and ditches as they went. Here and there a horse would refuse the leap, and once or twice a gleam of white leather above the neck of some animal showed where the rider had come to grief. Noting these things carefully, Desmond concluded that a tyro in fox-hunting, however gentle and tractable his "mount," would appear to small advantage in the rear of so precipitate a body, and wheeling his horse he soon found himself on the high road to the castle. Now it was that he discovered the loss of his hunting whip, which had probably gone to the bottom of the brook in the course of Nora's leap. Among the many boys and *gorsoons* that he encountered Hugh, however, soon found one willing to cut a switch from a neighbouring tree, the recompense of a shilling fairly throwing the youngster into an ecstasy of delight.

Touching Nora on the flank, our hero began to experience the questionable pleasure of a rapid trot along a rough road, and he began devoutly to wish that the day's sport was at an end. Just as he sighted the castle, however, the fox broke covert at the foot of the hill, and Desmond plainly distinguished the eager, panting hounds and two gentlemen and a lady riding close behind them. There being no obstacle in the way, Hugh himself touched Nora's side with his spurs, and bending forward joined in the chase. Save for the three hunters above-mentioned, he was now ahead of all the others. Reynard was evidently weakening, the course was open, and within a few minutes the dogs were rolling over and tearing their prey. The two gentlemen leaped from their horses and one of them, whom Desmond recognized as Dick Furlong, cried exultantly :

"In at the death ! The brush : I claim the brush !"

The lady, who was Miss Eva Burke, had reined in her foaming steed, and Desmond just at this moment drew up beside her. The fox, torn and mangled, lay dead on the ground, and some other members of the Hunt rode up, among them being the Squire.

"The brush !" said the other of the two foremost hunters : "the brush belongs to me by right. Hands off !"

"Not so, Mr. Cator !" said Furlong, "it is mine by right.

Fair play among gentlemen,"—and he stepped forward to claim the prize.

"Among gentlemen, sir?" said Cator, "what do you know about gentlemen?" and raising his hunting whip the haughty young seigneur drew the lash straight across the other's face, leaving thereon a vivid red line.

"Cator! Cator! for shame!" cried the master of the Hunt, while poor Furlong, deeply abashed, slunk away from his enraged adversary. Ere, however, he could utter a word of complaint or protest, his cause was espoused by an unlooked-for champion. Hugh Desmond had seen the blow, and beheld Furlong's retreat, but almost before the supercilious frown had left Cator's countenance our hero confronted him.

"You infernal coward!" cried Hugh, "how dare you do that?" and in an instant he was raining showers of blows from his light and pliant switch on the head and shoulders of the astonished huntsman.

"Separate them! part them!" cried the Squire; "my lord marquis, ride between them! make way!"

Just as the switch broke short in Desmond's hand, young Cator, maddened to desperation, sprang forward. As he did so our hero shot forth his right arm and planted a heavy blow between the eyes of his opponent, who fell prone on the grass. The marquis and his brother sportsmen, together with a host of onlookers of every degree, rushed in, the Squire grasping Hugh's arm and forcibly dragging him to the rear. Some ladies had also ridden up who were surveying the scene with looks of mingled terror and interest, Miss Eva Burke looking attentively from Hugh Desmond to the place where Mr. Cator, once more on his feet, stood pale and discomfited, and evidently by no means anxious to renew the contest. On the other hand, our hero stood flushed to the roots of his hair, his eyes sparkling and scintillating with excitement.

"Who is this man that has attacked Mr. Cator?" inquired Eva, fixing a glance rather of curiosity than of dislike upon Hugh.

"This gentleman is my cousin," said Squire Maurice; "Mr. Hugh Desmond, grandson of Garrett Desmond, my father's brother. My lord marquis," he said, addressing the master of the Hunt, "my cousin will be at the castle until next week should any further proceedings be taken."

"Hurrah for the ould stock!" shouted a deep-toned voice

from the crowd of farmers and townsmen; "hurrah for the ould stock! and to hell wid the bloody Orangeman!"

"Silence there, you omadhaun!" said the marquis, pointing as he did so to the centre of the mob where Pat Shine stood conspicuous. Then approaching the Squire he said:

"Maurice, my friend, your expianation is satisfactory. Cator will not dare to move in the affair; but, upon my honour, I am glad the old manner of obtaining satisfaction can no longer be had recourse to. Cator is by far too high and mighty, and I am not sorry he has learned a lesson,"—and with a bow to Hugh his lordship shook hands with the Squire and turned away toward his whipper-in.

"Come out of this as soon as possible," said the Squire to Hugh when they were once again on horseback; "come away, or all the girls will be falling in love with you and all the men will be jealous. Faith," he continued, as they rode up the hill toward the castle, we shall have Tom Cahill over this evening as sure as there is meat in mutton, and by St. Kevin's eye-tooth we'll make a night of it."

Now that returning reason enabled our hero to reflect upon the incidents of the last hour, he regretted very much that he had committed so grave an indiscretion.

"Cousin Maurice," he said, "for the first time in my life I realize that anger is a short madness, and I am thoroughly ashamed of myself for losing my self-control as I have done. I could live, I think, a hundred years in England without being betrayed into such imprudence; but really it almost seems that the very air of Ireland is provocative of quarrels. I can only plead in excuse for my conduct that the insolence of that cub Cator made my fingers tingle. For a moment he seemed to me an incarnation of all that is tyrannous and despotic."

"Not another word by way of exculpation, my dear boy. I tell you that your appearance in the streets of Inniscarra would provoke wild enthusiasm. Whatever Englishmen might think of your action, there is scarcely a man—or a woman either, for that matter—in Leinster who would not praise it. Poor Dick Furlong! he will never go hunting again, I am afraid. I am sorry for him."

"But why did he not defend himself, cousin?" inquired Hugh. "Surely so smart-looking a man cannot be a poltroon?"



"No, not quite a poltroon," answered the Squire. "Dick is a daring rider, never shirking a fence or a hurdle; but, like all our middle-class folk—those whom the French term the *bourgeoisie*—he is dominated by a kind of superstitious reverence for the gentry. I verily believe that some of them would rather be kicked by a nobleman than left altogether unnoticed. But here we are, home at last. Faith, I am glad of it; too much excitement tells at my age."

The Squire's prediction anent Father Tom was fulfilled by that ecclesiastic's appearance at dinner that evening. Even the sour-visaged Father O'Ruarc smiled a grim smile of satisfaction when the Squire dramatically portrayed the discomfort of the haughty representative of the most detested family of the district, and he cordially signified his assent when the administrator proposed a bumper "and no heeltaps" to the health of the "gallant young Paladin," as he termed our hero.

"Of course," said Lieutenant Wallace, "of course, Father Tom, I am always willing to assist in honouring my young friend; but I must enter my protest against the process of Hibernicising to which he appears to yield so readily. Were our stay here to be protracted, Father Tom, I should be apprehensive that Mr. Hugh Desmond—like your illustrious countryman in the story—would soon feel tempted, whenever he saw a head, to hit it with his shillelagh. You know that he has not acted quite like a wise man, for 'He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.' But come, let us have the bumper."

"A dog indeed, Lieutenant," said Father O'Ruarc, "all the Catholics are dogs. In the old times of proscription, when to be a Catholic was to live on sufferance, that family burnt its name on the memory of the people. Afterwards, in the Famine, they organized and headed a Souping Committee, and many were the souls they conducted to hell."

"Those are evil memories, Father Lawrence," replied the good-natured Lieutenant. "I wish from my heart that Irishmen could agree to bury them. Unhappily, your religious differences are coupled with the question of race-ascendancy, and it seems to me that they mutually fan each other and keep one another alive. Other countries have also gone through periods of religious conflict, out of which they have

emerged into toleration. You must excuse me for saying that I think your countrymen do not serve their country's best interests by so closely identifying their politics with their religion."

"For more than three centuries," said Father O'Ruarc, "the Catholic Church has been virtually identified with the patriotic aspirations of Irishmen; and the time is at hand when the clergy and people will stand shoulder to shoulder in demanding the restitution of Ireland's right."

"For the present, Father Lawrence," observed Hugh, "it looks like that; and I think we are all glad of it, so long as the demand be made temperately and wisely."

"Temperately and wisely?" said the curate. "I confess I do not understand what you mean."

"It is easy for me to explain my meaning," answered our hero. "The simple truth is, that in your so-called patriotic newspapers, and in various volumes of what we may call the Irish National Library, a systematic course is pursued of depreciating British courage, and indeed of all things English—or British,—while, on the other hand, even the failings of the Irish character are held up as virtues. Surely it is not wise to act in this manner? Indeed, were not the English people the best-natured people upon earth, they would hardly tolerate such methods, or treat them so contemptuously. I am sure that Germans, Frenchmen and Russians would never do so."

"Bedad, youngster!" exclaimed the administrator, "you hit us hard there. The methods you allude to almost make me ashamed of the cause sometimes. I could point to hundreds of passages such as you speak of. The plain truth is, that poor old Ireland is at least fifty years behind England in civilization,—of course, that is not her own fault altogether. If it should turn out that Father Larry there is a true prophet, and that the bishops and clergy take a prominent part in this new movement, I, for one, cordially hope they will teach our agitators better manners. It is neither polite nor politic, let me tell you, gentlemen, to ask a man a favour or to do you justice, while calling him a sanguinary, cowardly, base, and brutal old wretch."

Desmond smiled at Father Tom's illustration, and turning toward the curate, he said:

"There is just one other point, perhaps, to be considered,

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Father Lawrence. It was a Papal rescript that authorized Henry II. to invade Ireland,—all the quibbling in the world cannot alter that fact,—how do you know that another Papal rescript may not virtually compel the clergy to keep aloof from the struggle?"

"How do I know?" almost shouted Father Lawrence. "Why, the thing is utterly impossible. Pope Adrian IV. was an Englishman, and there lies the key of the whole mystery. Nothing like it can ever occur again."

Father Cahill shook his head slowly and emphatically.

"Larry," he said, "be not too sure of that. I myself, an older man than you, would not care to say so."

"No, indeed, my friends," said Hugh with decision, "place no confidence in that quarter. Father Lawrence, I fear that my remarks are not always grateful to you. I see that you are devoted to your country, and I like you the better for it. Let me say, however, that I have often heard, when at Holmwood, the great and increasing influence of the English Catholic hierarchy at the Vatican spoken of with much satisfaction. Take my word for it, if ever an English Government finds it necessary to negotiate with the Vatican the means of so doing are always ready in the persons of the Irish-detesting Catholic nobility of England and of certain English ecclesiastics and officials at Rome. Time, however, will tell."

"Hugh, my friend," said the administrator, "you have hit it, and Father O'Ruarc well knows that same. The influence you speak of we have for years recognized and deplored; it is anti-Irish always."

"Were such a thing to happen," said Father Lawrence, "I would——"

"No, no! Larry," interposed Father Tom, "do not say it. No, no!"

"At least I will say," cried the curate—who was evidently strongly agitated—"that it would be a cruel test for the clergy, for all who desire to preserve their loyalty to the church of their fathers and to do their duty to the dear father-land. As for the people——"

"Pardon me for interrupting you, Father Lawrence," said the Lieutenant, "but I speak as a liberty-loving Englishman. As for the people, if twenty thousand Papal rescripts could fetter their action in striving for liberty, depend upon it they cannot be made of the material proper to the sons of Freedom."

"Enough, gentlemen," said the Squire, "politics and polemics only spoil friendships. Our visitors will soon be leaving us, so let us find more pleasant themes of discourse. Father Tom, pass the decanter; faith, being in at the death of young Cator's self-conceit this morning has made me very thirsty."

### CHAPTER XXIII,

SHOWING HOW DOGBERRY COMPREHENDED THE VAGROM MAN.

OUR hero and his friend were standing in the hall, awaiting the appearance of the jaunting-car that was to convey them to the nearest railway station. Father O'Ruarc had not returned from mass, and knowing that the travellers would have to be stirring at an early hour, he had bidden them farewell the preceding night. The Squire, old Dan, the house-keeper, and indeed all the domestics of both sexes, were present, and, as the Lieutenant observed, it really seemed as though they were leaving the home of their childhood where they were known and loved by all.

"Cousin," said the Squire, "I had hoped that your visit would have been longer; but I suppose that at your age this humdrum country life would be a sort of martyrdom. However, it will not be long to our next meeting, since I have got you to consent to spend Christmas with me. Lieutenant Wallace, I hope you will have a pleasant journey home; I have enjoyed your society very much, and I hope you will not allow the friendship we have formed to decline and fade away. I depend upon this knight-errant to bring you, willy-nilly, to Carrig Desmond every summer. Ha! here is the car. Good-bye! Good-bye! Cousin, be sure to write regularly, or else, by St. Kevin! you will compel me to cross the Channel and to drop in upon you in that miserable den of yours in Clerkenwell. Dan! Mrs. Condon! come all of ye and say good-bye to the Young Master!"

The passage across to Holyhead proved rather boisterous, the sea being what Mr. Wallace termed "choppy." Among the passengers the friends noticed a tall man of about thirty whose demeanour was somewhat peculiar. He was evidently somewhat of an invalid, but at intervals he would press his

cloth cap close down over his ears, button his short coat up to the neck, and venture out on deck in defiance of the violent north-east gale and the showers of spray it brought with it.

"That man is certainly an American," said Mr. Wallace. "They mostly wear only a moustache, which, with their extraordinary want of colour, enables you to recognize them anywhere."

"Do you know," answered Desmond, "that he seems anxious? surely he cannot be afraid. I have noticed that he never leaves the saloon without being followed by that other elderly man who is dressed like a farmer, but who is no more a farmer than I am."

"How do you know that the man is not what he appears to be?" asked the Lieutenant.

"By the colour of his hands and by his complexion," said Hugh; "he is certainly not a farmer. Look; upon my word, there they go again. See, the fellow is evidently watching the American, as you call him."

After a brief absence the man with the cap re-entered the saloon, and making his way with some difficulty, because of the ship's motion, along the aisle, he took a seat near the Lieutenant. Scarcely had he done this when the other man also came in from the deck, his garments showing that his latest excursion from the cabin had resulted in a severe drenching. As he entered the saloon the sea-water trickled from the hat which he held in his hand; throwing a hasty look toward the stranger, who had thrown aside his cap and unbuttoned his jacket, the elderly man hurried towards his berth, no doubt with the intention of changing his clothing.

"We are having a rather rough passage of it," observed Mr. Wallace to the stranger.

"Indeed we are," he replied. "I left New York nearly ten days ago, and really this is the most unpleasant weather I have experienced since then. I have been absent from home nearly seven years,—years of vicissitude and hardship and sickness,—and I am almost on fire with eagerness to stand once more on the soil of my native land. Dear Old England! not until the exile can fly from himself can he be really satisfied from her."

"Upon my word, sir," said the Lieutenant, "I can sympathize with your feelings. Many a time when we have made the Lizard, after an absence of one or two years, have ]

seen tears gather unbidden in the eyes of many a weather-beaten old tar. But I took you for an American at first."

"Yea, I suppose so," answered the other. "No doubt I have become transformed in appearance. Excess of heat and excess of cold, with the illness resulting therefrom, must alter a man considerably; I know that my shoulders are bent and my cheek-bones as prominent as those of an Indian. But, after all, what does it matter? it will be all the same a hundred years hence. However, I must go to my berth and put my traps in order for landing."

"So you see the value of first impressions," said Hugh, when the stranger had departed. "The man is not an American, after all. But what are you thinking of, eh?"

"Why, I was thinking whether or not it will be all the same a hundred years hence, as he said; that is to say, I was trying to discover if the conviction of the utter vanity of human life can be made to confer a stoical resignation or acquiescence in the What Is to the extent of rendering one superior to the blows and buffets of malignant fortune."

"I think," said Desmond, "that G. H. Lewes somewhere intimates, while speaking of the Stoics, that to stand face to face with Death and have no regrets is to be regarded as proving one's unworthiness of life. It is the philosophy of the savage to which the civilized man is superior. I think we can agree to that,—

‘For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing, anxious being e’er resigned:  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind!’”

"Then you are no Pessimist, at any rate," said the Lieutenant. "Well, you are young, and doubtless you see all things, even the misty future, through rose-coloured glasses."

"You do not quite understand me yet, my friend, if you imagine that youth alone makes me optimistic," answered Hugh. "When I was even younger, I took a much more gloomy view of life and man's destiny than, I think, the majority of religious persons are wont to take. Now that my mind is free, or nearly so, from radical misconceptions, I can contemplate man's nature and destiny rationally, believing that 'whatever is, is right' in so far as that it cannot be otherwise. I know that it is possible, both for the individual

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and for society, to establish absolute, complete harmony with their surroundings, and consequently I am an Optimist in that I believe in the ultimate attainment of a synthesis between the subjective and objective aspects of man's organization."

"Too much philosophy, I am afraid, for St. George's Channel," said the Lieutenant, "and I am not quite sure that I understand you. If, however, you mean by your subjective and objective synthesis accord between perceiving mind and the things perceived——"

"Add no-things also, if you please," interrupted Desmond.

"No-things?—ah, yes, I understand, phantasmata and so forth,—well, if that be your meaning, it strikes me that such a synthesis would result in Hedonistic Anarchy."

"Surely not so awful a consummation," answered Hugh, "if I may take the term you have invented literally. Enjoyment, pleasure, will-gratification subject to no arbitrary, fixed veto."

"Subject, indeed, to nothing," said the Lieutenant, "unlimited, reckless sensuality."

"By no means, my friend; subject always to reason. The condition I anticipate is one of healthy bodies and sound minds, and such a condition forbids excess such as you seem to dread. Our true happiness will then consist in the maintenance of that synthesis or concord, a part of which must necessarily be the harmony of our own organic functions. Do you not see that voluptuousness or sensuality would destroy this harmony?"

"It sounds very well," replied Wallace, "but really you cannot make me at all enthusiastic over your picture. You saw those marines who took a deck passage at Kingston? Well, they were more than half drunk; one of them had a fiddle and he played 'Twas on a Windy Night' right on for hours; and while the whiskey lasted they were in heaven. How many ages must elapse ere you and your philosophy can bring the minds of such fellows as these into subjective-objective harmony, eh? Pshaw! Desmond; give us a little common sense."

Our hero could not forbear laughing at the disgust depicted in his friend's countenance. "Common sense, eh?" he said, "well, then, let me tell you that the thing I am most sensible of now is that we are once more in smooth water."

"Right," observed Mr. Wallace. "This is Holyhead. I am glad to get away from that awful tumbling, which makes me think of the hundred and seventh Psalm."

As the express train steamed out of the station the friends discovered among their fellow passengers the anxious-looking man and the elderly farmer,—that is, if he were a farmer. Directly opposite Hugh sat a short rotund man of middle age,—evidently a foreigner,—while the anxious gentleman and the elderly man sat beside each other fronting the Lieutenant.

In reply to a courteous salute from the stranger the friends bowed to him, and Desmond observed:—

"At last, sir, you are on the soil of England, or of Wales, which is almost the same thing; I hope your fire is not now quite so ardent."

"Thank you, sir; I am afraid to tell you how great is my delight. In a few short hours I shall be at home, in my mother's arms. Possibly you will think me a milksop; but, gentlemen, it is not so, I assure you. I am merely a living illustration of the old proverb, a rolling stone that has gathered no moss."

"And yet," said Lieutenant Wallace, "we generally regard America as an admirable gathering-place, as a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground, in fact."

"No doubt many have found it so," returned the stranger, "although I have not. But I am quite willing to concede that my case is a peculiar one. Had I been a sinewy, physically strong man, doubtless I could have earned a living."

Here the elderly man interposed. "May I ask, sir," he said, "if you are speaking of America?"

"Yes, sir," replied the other, "I have just come from there."

The foreign-looking gentleman, by whom not a word of the conversation had been lost, now exclaimed—

"You came by the *Scythia*, eh? Yes, I thought so; I left on the *Erin* the day before; but she is not swift. You were in Queenstown some hours before us. You go to London, eh?"

Something in the last speaker's manner excited our hero's attention and stimulated his curiosity.

"Pardon me," he said, "if I am intrusive; but you also are from America? Yet you are not an American, I think."

"*Deo gratias!* no; I am a German, Ulrich von Kloss, of Marbourg. I have been in America six months studying,

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and the democracy observing, for my book on the *Wechselsweise Folge*,—what you call it in English?—the, ah—

"Alternations or vicissitudes, perhaps," suggested Mr. Wallace.

"Yes, that is it, thanks," said Herr von Kloss, with a bow to the Lieutenant, "my book on the Alternations of the Monarchical and Democratical Principles in History. *Ich habe es angefangen, aber ich habe es nicht geenaigt.*\* But you, sir, *sprechen sie Deutsch?*"†

"*Ich spreche es ein wenig,*"‡ replied Mr. Wallace, "*aber Ich verstehe das Deutsche besser als Ich es sprechen kann,* so if you please, we will talk in English, Herr von Kloss. You thank God that you are not an American; do you not like America then?"

"*Ich liebe ihn nicht mehr,*—I do not like it any more," said the other vehemently, shaking his head most emphatically; "it is the country where the birds do not sing, where the flowers perfume not, and where the women do not love. Ach! it is the country of the mean, the mediocrity. I like it not."

"I sometimes think want of success lies at the bottom of my not liking America," said the voyager; "but this gentleman is evidently much more prejudiced than I am. As to the women not loving, why, according to the papers, they sometimes love too well, as indeed women do everywhere. But I was born under an evil star, I guess,—you see I have learned so much Yankee, at any rate. My name is Wiltshire,—Charles Wiltshire,—and some years ago I was private secretary to a nobleman who has since become a cabinet minister. During my spare time,—and I had plenty of it,—I wrote a comedy which was brought out at the Princess's and which remained on the bills long enough to put some money in my pocket and to dazzle me with the prospect of becoming a successful playwright. I resigned my secretaryship, and took to writing a five-act drama. Gentlemen, that drama has not yet seen the light. Finally, I went to New York, where I played a minor character in my own comedy, which, after having been taken by my manager to Texas and on through the West, netted us both a small profit,—nothing great. On

\* "I have begun but not finished it."

† "Do you speak German?"

‡ "I speak it a little; but I understand German better than I can speak it,"—which is precisely the case with the chronicler also.

my return to New York I tried my hand at journalism, in which I had some funny experiences. It was a miserable hand-to-mouth existence, and everywhere the fact of my being a 'Britisher' turned to my disadvantage. It is surprising to see and feel the depth of animosity retained by the average Americans towards the English, and which they manifest even while aping English fashions and doing their utmost to emulate English costumes. I found my very accent an impediment."

"Dear, dear!" observed the elderly man, "I had no idea that our cousins were so predisposed against us."

"It is scarcely worth mentioning, perhaps," continued Wiltshire, "but there are thousands of Englishmen in America who will confirm my experience by their own. I assure you, gentlemen, that there is no other country in the civilized world in which foreigners are so insulted as Englishmen in America are insulted by American citizens."

"Yet," remarked the Lieutenant, "our notables,—whether members of the aristocracy, or lions scientific, literary or artistic,—are welcomed there, and come home with well-filled purses."

"True enough," replied Mr. Wiltshire; "they become the rage, and if they are willing to place themselves on show they reap their reward. However, I was not a lion, and so I did not occupy the public attention very much. I know that failure distorts the vision, and so does success. What Englishman does not regret that Charles Dickens should have written that second preface, or whatever it is, to 'Martin Chuzzlewit'?"

"I assure you," said Desmond, "that I have no feeling in the matter, but then I am not a hero-worshipper, and even if I were my heroes would not be taken from amongst novel-writers. But you did not succeed in journalism!"

"No, sir, I did not," returned Wiltshire; "I once got an introduction to some great Mogul among magazine editors, who employed me to write a special paper on a certain subject of importance, just as he would have employed a carpenter to make a box. I myself was very much interested in the question, but my enthusiasm ebbed like Bob Acres' courage before the cool business-like impudence of that infernal cad. I was limited to three thousand words, a proof of my paper was sent to an opponent of my views, in order that both

articles might be published in juxtaposition, and I was—but let me read it to you.”

Here Mr. Wiltshire drew out his pocket-book and after a brief search took therefrom a sheet of paper.

“This,” he said, “is the editorial order for the article I spoke of, and I will read it to you as a specimen of the treatment accorded to the hack-writers in a country where such creatures as this editor in some measure control the reading of the people. Listen, please: ‘Do your very best from a literary point of view, as it will make you if you make a hit. You will get twenty-five dollars for your work if it is not considered suitable, so as to protect you from loss; fifty dollars if it is published, and it will make you famous besides. Write it as soon as possible, but take time enough to do your level best—or altitude best.’ There, gentlemen, what do you think of that?”

“Think?” said Desmond, “think? Why, really, that I should scarcely attach much value to such fame as this ‘altitude best’ man seems able to dispense. He seems to have stepped out of the *Dunciad*:

“ ‘Glory and gain the industrious tribe provoke,  
And gentle Dulness ever loves a joke.’

But the train is slowing, I think; yes, we are coming to a station.”

“It is Bangor, I think,” said the Lieutenant, “we shall probably stop here some minutes.”

“Glad to hear it, I am sure,” replied Wiltshire, “I will stretch my legs a little on the platform then.”

As the train drew up to the platform, Mr. Wiltshire moved toward the window.

“You will find the door locked, probably,” said Desmond, “but the guard will open it, or one of the porters when the train stops.”

The other, having lowered the window, endeavoured to turn the handle of the door. At this moment, the elderly man stood up, placed a small black travelling bag in the Lieutenant’s hands, and dexterously seizing Wiltshire by the collar he forced him bodily and unceremoniously down into the lap of Herr von Kloss, very much to that worthy gentleman’s astonishment, and indeed no less to that of all in the compartment.

"What the devil do you mean by this outra——"

"Hush, my fine fellow!" said the other, "the game's up, and you are my prisoner," and while speaking he glanced significantly at a revolver which he held in his right hand, the muzzle pointing toward the roof of the carriage. "Yes, I arrest you in the name of the Queen; I am Inspector Braithwaite, of Scotland Yard, and you are Martin Walsh, the Dynamiter. You carried it off well,—by God, sir, you carried it off very well! but I have followed you all the way from Queenstown, sizing you up. Your story was a good one,—a neat one,—but I saw your motive. Yes, sir, the game's up, so take it coolly. Hold on! I am not such a damned fool as to let you leave the carriage. There!" and almost as if by magic he had, while not relinquishing the pistol, brought the man's wrists together and clasped around them a pair of glittering handcuffs.

"I assure you, Inspector," said the prisoner, "you have made a terrible mistake. I am Charles Wiltshire, and——"

"Yes, yes, I know, my hearty," replied the detective, "stow all that! I beg your pardon, mounseer,"—this to Herr von Kloss,—“but I will relieve you in a second. You, sir,” he said to Mr. Wallace, “just look after that bag carefully for a short time: God only knows but it is chock full of dynamite; so be careful.”

The train having stopped, the detective signalled to the guard, the door was opened, and, despite his protestations, the prisoner removed to the platform, Lieutenant Wallace showing intense relief when Inspector Braithwaite assumed control of the black bag. The detective had no sooner jumped out of the carriage than he was joined by two stalwart men, whose avocation their tourist tweeds but poorly concealed.

"I must have a separate compartment," said the inspector to the guard; "you can manage that easily I suppose, eh!"

"All right, sir," replied that official, "come this way, if you please."

"One moment, Inspector, if you will be so good," said the prisoner, who took the affair with remarkable coolness; "let me speak two words to that gentleman in the carriage," and he nodded towards Desmond. "You are going to London, sir; will you take the trouble to run down to Wanstead, George Lane, and inquire for Mrs. Wiltshire? She is my



mother and you will explain the mistake of this good man who takes me for a Fenian."

"I will do so with pleasure," cried Hugh, "and, Inspector, I feel convinced that you are under a painful mistake."

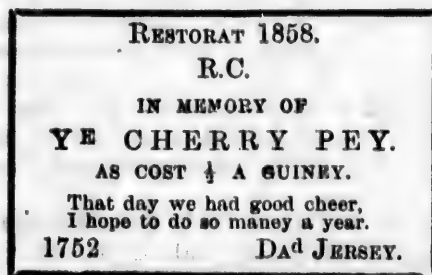
"Maybe, maybe, young man," answered the detective ironically, "but you have the address, George Lane, Wanstead, and time's up. Come on, friends, this way."

Thus left to themselves, the three travellers had enough food for conversation on their journey, the German gentleman being evidently strongly impressed by the shrewdness and sagacity of the secret police of England. Desmond and the Lieutenant, however, who knew them, at least by repute, much better than did Herr von Kloss, agreed in the conclusion that Inspector Braithwaite had sacrificed the substance for the shadow, and our hero was eager to reach Euston in order to satisfy himself upon the matter. Thus it was that, while Lieutenant Wallace was being conveyed in a hansom toward Paddington, to catch the train that was to convey him to Devonshire, Hugh Desmond had taken a cab to Liverpool Street, on his way to the suburb where he hoped to find Mrs. Wiltshire.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### WHEREIN MR. CURTIN CHANGES LODGINGS.

A FEW minutes' walk from the station at Snarebrook brought our hero to George Lane. It was yet early in the evening, and the light was good. While he was considering where to begin his inquiry for Mrs. Wiltshire his eye was caught by a tablet on the wall of a house, upon which was carved the following singular inscription:—



Marvelling somewhat that as much immortality should be accorded to the memory of a cherry pie as to that of a great commander, statesman, or poet on some monumental tablet in the Abbey, Desmond copied the inscription into his pocket-book. While doing this a policeman, upon whose head time seemed to hang heavily, sauntered by.

"You are interested in the Cherry Pie, I see, sir," he said. "Well, the gentleman who restored the tablet still lives at Woodford, but nobody knows why it was that in 1752 such a pie should have cost half-a-guinea."

"Either it must have been a very large pie," remarked Hugh, "or else cherries must have been unusually hard to procure that year. But, policeman, can you tell me if a Mrs. Wiltshire lives hereabout?"

"Mrs. Wiltshire, the old lady who has a son in America play-acting? Yes, sir, that cottage down there on the left, inside the two big elm trees, is her house."

Hugh's heart fairly leaped with pleasure at this confirmation of the account given of himself by the traveller, and by his own conviction that the detective had,—as detectives in real life seem bound to do,—made a serious mistake. He hurried toward the cottage, passed through the trim little garden, gay with chrysanthemums and asters, and knocked at the door. It was opened by an old lady who wore a widow's cap, but whose countenance,—despite the evident traces of many sorrows and afflictions,—was irradiated by the calm sunset glow of patience and resignation,—or shall we term it acquiescence?

"Your name, ma'am," began Desmond, "is Wiltshire, I believe. If so, and unless I am mistaken, I have to request the favour of an interview with you, if you please."

"Yes, sir," said the lady, "my name is Wiltshire. Come in, if you please," and she led the way into a little parlour, whose window resembled a kit-cat portrait in a framework of fragrant jasmine, the spreading leaves of the creeper deepening the darkness within the room so much that at first our hero found it difficult to distinguish anything. There were a lady and a gentleman present, and they seemed to have been on the eve of departing just as Desmond's knock had called the old lady from the room.

"If you please, Mr. Kirke," said Mrs. Wiltshire, placing a chair for the new visitor, and speaking somewhat tremulously,

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"Something tells me that I am about to hear news of my poor boy. If so, I should like you to remain a little longer, and you also, Miss, if you would be so good. It is rather dark in here, sir," she said, addressing Desmond, "but if you please, before lighting the lamp, I would like to know if my presentiment is to be confirmed. In that case, whatever the news may be, I would rather receive it in the gloaming, I think."

"I am happy, madam," replied Desmond, "to be the bearer of good news. Your son, Mr. Charles Wiltshire, is now in England,—in London,—and I have come here to explain why he is unable to fulfil the dearest wish he has,—that of seeing his mother."

"You have seen him, sir?" said the good old lady, "you have seen my Charles? He is well,—but no; or what would keep him from his mother's embrace?"

"He is well, Mrs. Wiltshire, quite well, I assure you," answered Desmond, "but the victim of one of the most ludicrous errors that ever the official mind fell into."

"Excuse me, sir; just one moment!" and Mrs. Wiltshire, retiring from the little parlour, almost immediately returned bringing with her a lighted lamp. As its radiance illuminated the room Hugh Desmond sprang to his feet in astonishment, for sitting there before him, on the other side of a small round table, and pale with suppressed agitation, was she whose memory he had for months vainly striven to banish,—the daughter of the Northcote Lily, Edith Allyn. There are in life,—or rather in some life-emergencies,—moments wherein man's cerebration bids defiance to and temporarily nullifies all restrictions of time. Such, they tell us, are the instants which elapse between the last sinking of a drowning person and the loss of consciousness, instants during which the experiences of a lifetime come into mental review, their perception, analysis, and grouping being accomplished without confusion. Such a moment was this in the life of Hugh Desmond, a kaleidoscopic portion of time wherein all the circumstances of the old life at Culm Tor appeared in due order and luminosity.

"Edith—Miss Allyn!" he faltered; "is it possible?"

As she rose to greet him Hugh saw, or fancied, that she was greatly moved. She was very beautiful, her dainty figure being perhaps a trifle more developed than before. The long-lashed, liquid brown eyes met his very steadily, and as their hands touched the colour came back to her cheek.

"I knew it was you when I heard you speak," she said. "You are altered very much,—shall I say you are so much more imposing? How very surprising all this is! But do not let us forget Mrs. Wiltshire. She is an old friend of this gentleman, who is also the clergyman of the next pariah:—permit me: Mr. Desmond, Mr. Kirke; Mr. Kirke, Mr. Desmond."

Now it was that, for the first time, Hugh turned his eyes toward the other occupant of the apartment. Instinctively he recognized that the dapper little gentleman in Roman collar, neat surtout, and side whiskers, with a creamy-pink complexion like a Gloire de Dijon rose, was the Honourable and Reverend Richmond Kirke, the man whom Rumour, personified by Lieutenant Wallace, had represented as being the accepted suitor of Edith. The gentlemen courteously, ceremoniously exchanged bows: first impressions sometimes count for much, and there was evidently nothing sympathetic between the clergyman and the dark, imperious-looking stranger who had so suddenly appeared to claim acquaintance with the young lady.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Wiltshire," said Desmond, resuming his seat, "I will now tell you what I know respecting your son. Briefly, then, he has been, by the absurd mistake of a police-officer, arrested as a Fenian conspirator,"—and our hero rapidly narrated all that had occurred in connection with the arrest.

"But where, dear sir," inquired the old lady anxiously, "do you suppose my boy is? Perhaps in Clerkenwell, Newgate, or some police-cell, in darkness and misery. Oh, what can we do? what can we do, Miss Allyn, Mr. Kirke?"

Edith had taken a chair beside the distressed mother, and taking her hands in hers she endeavoured to allay her fears.

"Do not be anxious, Mrs. Wiltshire," she said. "This is, as Mr. Desmond told us, only a ludicrous error. The idea of mistaking your son for a Fenian and a conspirator is really most absurd. Perhaps Mr. Desmond will suggest what course we should follow to secure the immediate release of the young man."

As she spoke Edith knew that Hugh Desmond's eyes were fixed upon her face. She did not venture to look up or to return his glance; and he experienced an indescribable sense of pain at the idea that she sought as much as possible to

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avoid him and to escape from any allusion to the past. Doubtless, he thought, she was right in thus acting, for, even though she had not been the promised bride of the clergyman, was not he, Hugh Desmond, bound in honour and by affection—he insisted, by affection—to another?

"If Mrs. Wiltshire," he replied, "is able to go up to London, and make application at Scotland-Yard to-night, I have no doubt her son's release may be effected. I myself will, of course, accompany her; but it is desirable that some third person, of respectability, should also testify to and recognize the identity of Mr. Wiltshire."

"That," said Mr. Kirke, "I can at least do. Mrs. Wiltshire lived for years in our family, and I have known Charley since we were boys."

"In that case, then," observed Hugh, "if we can be at the station in time for the eight-fifteen, there will be no difficulty."

Hearing this decision, Mrs. Wiltshire and Edith left the parlour, and in a very few minutes re-appeared, the former prepared for her unexpected journey to town. The cottage was left in charge of a little girl, half-domestic, half-companion, and the party proceeded toward the station at Snarebrook. There was but little opportunity afforded Hugh for converse, but as they passed through the village Mrs. Wiltshire advanced to the front with the clergyman, and Edith Allyn found herself side by side with the whilome assistant at Culm Tor.

"Miss Allyn," he observed, "the nature of my visit to Wanstead, and this hurried walk barely leave time to express my astonishment that a casual meeting with a stranger in a railway carriage should have led to this encounter. Now I remember that I had heard of Mr. Toynbee's acceptance of a school in this district,—I did not know the exact place, but merely that it was somewhere near Epping Forest."

"The school is called Wanstead Hall," she replied. "You could easily find it, indeed it is plainly visible from the station. May I tell aunt and uncle Toynbee that we may expect you in a day or two? They would be delighted to see you."

Was this young man, despite his look of resolution, weak and unstable, that for the moment he seemed to have forgotten his plighted troth? Surely, as men estimate firmness and stability of character, he was as strong as the oak; nevertheless he replied:

"Edith, I will come if you assure me that I am forgiven;

if I could but know that in your severest judgment you could acquit me of conscious, pre-determined wrong."

"I have nothing to forgive," she replied, her lovely eyes meeting his shyly yet ingenuously; "'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him,' 'But when I said My foot hath slipped, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.'"

"Edith," said Hugh, "you are an angel. I will come down on Sunday. When I first heard of the engagement to this parson, this Mr. Kirke——"

What our hero would have said went unspoken, for the parson, as Hugh had somewhat contemptuously called him, here stepped a few yards back from Mrs. Wiltshire and hurriedly addressing the young lady said:

"Miss Allyn, the train is already near the bridge, so we must hasten. Good bye! you shall hear of our success to-morrow morning. Come, sir, or we shall lose the train after all."

Scarcely giving our hero time to press the little hand extended to him, the excited clergyman hurried him off to the flight of steps which Mrs. Wiltshire had already begun to ascend. Panting and almost breathless the old lady reached the platform just as the train came in. As the door of a second-class carriage was shut behind them, Mr. Kirke, with the two tickets held firmly between his lips, sank into a corner seat.

"Whew!" he said, "I just managed to get them. Fortunately, the porter knew me, or the gate would have been closed in my face."

It was nearly midnight when Hugh Desmond, weary enough, as the reader may imagine, found himself in Gloucester Street. The light in the second-floor window showed that his telegram from Dublin had been received, and he felt glad to know that his home,—humble lodging though it were,—awaited him. There had been little trouble or delay in accomplishing the release of Charlie Wiltshire, even Inspector———having realized that he had been led by a fancied———into a serious error,—affording every facility in the direction of the prisoner's liberation. Mr. Kirke and our hero were so far favoured as to be permitted to peruse the

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description, forwarded from New York, of a certain real or mythical Martin or John Walsh,—said to be a dangerous character engaged in a perilous and frightful mission,—and Wiltshire himself, annoyed though he was despite the assurance of certain compensation, was fain to acknowledge that the description fitted him exactly.

"There, however," he said to the Inspector, "I hope the resemblance terminates. You cannot make me believe that I have so far lost what the Yankees used to call my 'detestable English accent,'—but which if dollars could purchase it would find a ready market in any American city,—as to talk like an Irish-American. When you discover the real conspirator, Mr. Detective, take my word for it, you will find him hanging on to his vowel-sounds like no Englishman ever does,—premonitory I hope of another hanging that he deserves for leading you into this mistake, if for nothing else."

The poor fellow, overjoyed as he was to see his mother, did not forget to thank Hugh for the trouble he had taken, and he had insisted that Desmond should accompany them in the four-wheeler to Liverpool Street.

"You are tired," he said, "and have only come from Ireland! Why, look at me,—I have come across the Atlantic ocean. You can ride home in the same cab, but come with us, that I may hear all about how you managed."

There was nothing for it but to humour him, especially as it was plain that it was his gratitude that induced him to speak in this way. The ultimate result, however, was that Hugh entered Gloucester Street thoroughly tired out. As he passed the house where the Curtins resided, he noticed a light also in their windows; but this was nothing unusual, because William sometimes worked at his reports right on into the small hours. Just as Desmond approached his own residence he saw a woman coming toward him. She was almost wholly enveloped in a dark mantle, and her face was shaded, but our hero's heart seemed to be arrested in its motion as he recognized something familiar in the stranger's carriage. He stepped forward to meet her, and stopped suddenly before her like one transfixed. Their eyes met.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Lady Blanche!"

In a moment their lips had met and his arm had encircled her waist protectingly.

"Blanche, my dearest," said he, "what does this mean? I

have just returned from Ireland, but I have been strangely occupied since I got to town, and now I find you here. Tell me, have you been long waiting?"

"Nearly, three hours, I think," she said. "The people of the house told me you were coming, and they asked me to wait in the house. I did so for about an hour, and then I said I would not intrude upon them any longer. Since then I have walked about, always like a person in a hurry, lest the police might suspect me of something. Hugh, did you ask *why* I am here?"

"No, my love," he answered, "I did not, because I know why. Come, we must arrange for your temporary home."

With her hand resting lightly on his arm, Blanche accompanied her lover to the door. Hugh was compelled to knock for admittance, his latch-key being in his portmanteau in the cloak-room at Euston. The door was opened by the landlady, Mrs. Wyatt, whose countenance betrayed her surprise at finding her lodger thus accompanied at so late an hour.

"We got the telegram, sir, this morning," she said; "but we thought you would have been here much earlier. You will find a fire in your room. This lady, I think, has been waiting for you some hours."

"Thank you, Mrs. Wyatt," answered Hugh, "you are very kind. I have had a somewhat troublesome commission imposed on me since my arrival in town, one involving a ride into the suburbs and a visit to Scotland Yard. This lady is a very dear friend of mine. I will ask you to take her up to my rooms while I run up to Mr. Curtin's. It is so late that time is precious."

"Yes, sir," said the landlady; "my husband has gone to bed,—he is a polisher, Miss,—and my eldest daughter and myself were sitting up together. Take my key, Mr. Desmond; this way, Miss, if you please."

"Upon my word, Mr. Desmond," said William Curtin, as the two entered the reporter's little parlour, "you are getting to be quite a rake. Fie, sir, fie! what sort of hours are these? Mary, my dear, come out, if you can, here is somebody from Ireland whom you know."

Mrs. Curtin at once put in an appearance, although Hugh had an uneasy sensation that she had previously retired for the night. Husband and wife greeted our hero warmly, but Mary's woman's eye at once detected his anxiety.

"William," she said, "Mr. Desmond is in some trouble, I think, and has come to you for advice."

"Thank you, Mrs. Curtin; yes, that is so," replied Hugh; "the fact is that I wish to find a respectable quiet lodging for a lady, and that at once."

"A lady!" exclaimed Curtin, opening his eyes to their fullest extent, "a lady! Where is she, in the name of heaven?"

"She is in my apartments, Mrs. Curtin," said Desmond, ignoring William's look of surprise in his haste to prevent any regrettable suspicion that the reporter's wife might possibly form. "She is Lady Blanche Meadows, daughter of the Earl of Guisborough."

"The saints defend us!" said William, sinking into the nearest chair, "the daughter of Lord Guisborough of Holmwood Hall in your rooms!"

"The lady is my betrothed," replied Hugh, "and she has just come to London. She must have a lodging at once; can you suggest one?" and he looked appealingly to Mrs. Curtin.

"Of course I can," said the good woman, "the lady must condescend to pass the night in our poor place, while you, William, must go to Mr. Desmond's. Wait a bit,"—she added,—"I will be ready to go with you in a moment. William, find your hat and what else you may need; I declare you look stupefied."

That Mr. Curtin was astounded was most unquestionable. He did not utter one intelligible word during the passage between the two houses. Blanche was sitting very comfortably in the arm-chair, before a good fire, her bonnet and mantle having been thrown carelessly on the table. Mrs. Wyatt was standing, with her hands folded, on the other side of the fireplace, gravely narrating an interesting reminiscence of her youth, when she had been housemaid at a clergyman's down in 'Ampshire, and when,—had she but known what married life was like,—she would have incontinently dismissed the then aspiring young polisher, and have lived and died a virgin.

Mary Curtin and her husband lingered respectfully near the door while Hugh went forward and bent down toward Blanche's ear.

"My love," he said, "welcome to my home in London. I have brought two good friends of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Curtin, who live near by; Mrs. Curtin will arrange for to-night, if you will trust to her."

Blanche stood up and looked toward Mary, who rightly construed the glance as an invitation to approach.

"Mrs. Curtin," said the young lady, "let me apologize for the trouble I am giving; I assure you that I am only too glad to know that you will assume such a burden as I shall prove to be."

The reporter's wife barely touched the extended hand. Blanche drew her forward and kissed her, and for the moment it really seemed as though Mary were a suppliant for protection and grace.

"My lady," she said, with that innate good-breeding which enables the humblest Irishwoman to give honour where honour is due, "I only wish that I could offer accommodation suited to your rank and station."

"Hush, dear; not another word of apology," said Blanche. "I will go with you at once, for Mrs. Wyatt and these gentlemen are very tired, I am sure. Mr. Desmond, will you not introduce your friend?"

William came forward, still wearing a half-dazed look of surprise, and respectfully saluted the high-born maiden.

"You do not know," said Hugh, "that Mr. Curtin almost ran away with me from Holmwood. At any rate, we came to London together; he was at the League meeting. I am indebted to him for much true friendship and real kindness."

"Indeed?" replied Blanche, "then he has made me also his debtor. Mr. Curtin, I thank you sincerely."

"Your ladyship is very good to say so," answered Curtin; "I have done very little for Mr. Desmond; but if I can be of any assistance to your ladyship"—and here the reporter broke down.

Mrs. Wyatt, who had by this time got an inkling of the rank of the strange lady, and who perchance,—women being keenly acute in affairs of the heart,—more than suspected the interest existing between her and Desmond, now came forward time-defying, with a suggestion of refreshment.

"On no account, Mrs. Wyatt," said Blanche, "there is really no necessity so to encroach on your good-nature. It is long after midnight. Mrs. Curtin, I am ready to accompany you. Gentlemen, good night!"

Though she were to live a thousand years,—she is, I believe, yet alive in London, though long since a widow,—Mary

Curtin will never forget the occurrences of that night. She endeavoured to persuade Blanche to occupy the little bed-chamber alone, but her efforts were futile.

"Your sister, you say, is asleep in her own room," said Blanche. "I insist that you stay with me; indeed, dear Mrs. Curtin, I want advice and direction from you."

Thus pressed, Mary yielded; in truth, she found it impossible long to oppose so resolute a guest. Having extinguished the night lamp, the reporter's wife summoned up courage to say:

"My lady, let us kneel together and offer our aspirations to the throne of God, and ask for the intercession of the Blessed Mother."

Certain it is that Mary Curtin, though she live ten thousand years, will never forget the answer she received to her solicitation.

"Mrs. Curtin," said Blanche, "of the God in whom I believe I myself am a part and a portion, and so also are you. He is the 'All-embracing, All-sustaining one,' around us and within us. He needs no prayers, no thanks, no tears. We cannot help but love Him, the Seen and Unseen, the mysterious All. My heart is filled with him already, and in that other being whom I love so dearly the Deity vouchsafes me even a larger portion of the eternal Happiness, heart, love, God!"

Blanche Meadows was a woman,—I would that she were mine!

## CHAPTER XXV.

WHEREIN DOGBERRY MEETS A BEGGAR.

**A**CTING on the advice of Curtin, and accompanied by him, Desmond on the following morning secured rooms for Blanche at the Norwood Private Hotel, Adam Street, Adelphi, the house where his friend the Lieutenant always stopped while in London. Having done this he called a cab, determined that his friend should, if possible, breakfast at his family table.

"You were unceremoniously banished from your bed last night, Mr. Curtin; it would be too much were we to compel

the separation to extend to the table also. One can dine any where; but breakfast nowhere so satisfactorily as at home, even though that be only a bachelor's lodging like mine. Therefore, let us go there."

They found Mrs. Curtin and Nellie straining the resources of the establishment to their utmost in honour of their guest. There was no show of bustle or agitation, however; Mary's well-disciplined, chastened mind had attained,—and many so-called philosophers have failed to reach this happy dignity,—what the poet terms "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," and, though neither strong-minded nor learned, the reporter's wife was yet a lady. At her own request Lady Blanche was allowed to make the tea, which she did,—as Miss Nellie Curtin afterwards affirmed with surprise,—"just as naturally, sure, as if she were a cottager's wife." Having early in the morning learned from her sister the quality of the stranger, Nellie had not asked the reason of Lady Blanche's sojourn there, but had devoted herself assiduously to helping her sister. At every possible opportunity, however, she indulged her curiosity, ever and anon blushing like a peony when the object of so much attention smilingly returned her glance. William Curtin also seemed too shyly respectful to lead the way into his own apartments, and he stood, hat in hand, contemplating the breakfast table and the room generally in an amusingly perplexed manner. Lady Blanche, however, came forward and offered her hand.

"Mr. Curtin," she said, "you have been shamefully treated on my account, and I must throw myself on your mercy for pardon. It would be but justice were you to throw me out of your house this morning in return for having been yourself driven out last night."

"Throw you out, my lady?" said William, his native readiness coming to his rescue, "sure you are too lovely a flower to be treated that way. I only regret that our circumstances do not——"

"Hush, hush!" she replied, "I hope you will regard me as an old friend, as I do you. Now, here is Mr. Desmond wearing an air of great importance."

Hugh was standing near, pleased to see her so much at home with his unassuming friends.

"Indeed," he said, "do I look so grave? Well, we have transacted some affairs already this morning; but really,

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now I look at Mr. Curtin's face, I seem to see my own feelings reflected. Do you know that what you take to be an air of importance is, I verily believe, only the symptom of hunger? Mrs. Curtin, do you think your larder can withstand such a combined attack?"

"I hope so, Mr. Desmond," replied Mary, "but really William seems to have brushed his hair the wrong way this morning. Do go and put it right, dear; you look as though you had been frightened."

"I am afraid I hurried him a little this morning," said Hugh. "We have been to the Strand and secured apartments for Lady Blanche in a nice, pleasant private hotel in the Adelphi."

"Your ladyship," observed Mrs. Curtin during breakfast, "did not bring your maid up to town with you?"

"Ah, yes," said Desmond, "what has become of Madeleine?"

"She has gone home to Brittany, but only for a holiday," replied Blanche. "I think she is much attached to me, Mrs. Curtin, and when I am settled she is to join me at once."

"But in the meantime, Lady Blanche, you must have some one to wait on you," said Mrs. Curtin, decisively. "I have been thinking that my sister,—Mr. Curtin's sister, Nellie,—might be of some use, at least for the time."

Nellie's cheeks again flushed crimson as she found all eyes turned toward her. She was a bright, sharp girl, however, able to come to a decision with rapidity.

"If Lady Blanche," she said, "would make allowances for my awkwardness, I should be only too glad to wait on her."

"No, my dear Nellie," said Blanche, "not to wait on me; that must not be. You are not a servant, you must remember. But if you will be my companion I shall be very glad also, and perhaps even after my maid Madeleine returns to me you could stay with us. Shall it be so?"

"Thank you, my lady," said Nellie, delighted at this prospective change in her humdrum existence, and altogether so pleased thereby as to suddenly lose her appetite for breakfast.

"I have decided, dear," said Blanche to Hugh, later on,—Curtin having volunteered to go to St. John's Street for a cab,— "to take Mrs. Curtin into our confidence. I am very much impressed with her thoughtfulness and foresight. Have you any objection to this?"

"None whatever, my love, I assure you ; on the contrary, it is precisely what I should like you to do."

And so it was that on Mary's re-appearance, Blanche took her hand and drew her down to a seat beside her on the lounge. Nellie had gone to her own room to prepare for the approaching transfer. Briefly but perspicuously the lady told the story of her love, Desmond himself being a listener to the narration. Mrs. Curtin said but little, although her eyes glistened with something suspiciously like tears, but when the recital was over she clasped Blanche in her arms and kissed her brow. Why it is that women thus manifest their sympathy is unknown to the chronicler ; such kisses, however, like the contact of two ants' antennæ, always convey mutual intelligence, or indicate tender commiseration.

"You see, dear Mrs. Curtin," continued Blanche, "I am now of age, mistress of myself, and also of certain funded property,—not very much, perhaps, but enough to ensure a comfortable subsistence. I left Holmwood only when his lordship began to insist that I should so far respect his authority as to allow another man to indulge certain anticipations. Then, after explaining the necessity to my mother, I left Holmwood,—not secretly altogether, but in the absence of my father and my brother. On such occasions, even now, men sometimes use force ; but a woman's weapon, dear friend, is her wit. I have tried to be brave, but I have judged it better not to trust to myself alone."

"You have done right, my love," said Hugh, "and I am sure Mrs. Curtin will help you with her counsel until the day comes when you need apprehend nothing. You will see to all the arrangements, will you not, Mrs. Curtin ?—I mean those for which a man is unqualified ; I myself will attend to everything else."

"I thank you, my lady, for your confidence," said Mrs. Curtin to Blanche ; "I will do what I can to help you, and I think you will find Nellie very useful. She is quick to learn, and to do anything for you will be a pleasure to her."

Before noon Lady Blanche was comfortably established at her hotel. Almost her first task was to write to her parents, her brother, and Mrs. Champernowne, while to a few selected friends in various parts of England she sent cards announcing her engagement to Hugh Desmond, Esq. Realizing his immediate duty, our hero set about procuring the marriage license,

and he wrote to Carrig Desmond requesting his cousin to be prepared to leave for London immediately after receiving a telegram summoning him thither. Having posted his letters at St. Martin's Le Grand, Hugh slowly proceeded home through Little Britain, Smithfield, and St. John's Street. Happening, at the opening of Duke Street into Smithfield, to look behind him he saw on the other side of the way two men, in one of whom,—although no longer disguised as a farmer,—he thought he recognized Inspector Braithwaite, of Scotland Yard. Caring nothing for all the detectives in London, Hugh gave no further attention to them; but in St. John's Street he again saw the men, and now the idea began to dawn on his mind that he himself was somehow the cause of their presence there. By way of putting this to the test, he made sundry stoppages and retrogressions, only to find the two men regulating their progress by his own. Hugh at once knew what this signified, and he smiled to himself at the thought. He continued up the street almost to within a stone's throw of Skinner and Gloucester Streets, when he suddenly changed his gait for a rapid walk, which in a few minutes brought him to his own residence.

As our hero anticipated, he had scarcely been seated when the first-floor bell was rung. In due time Mrs. Wyatt knocked at Hugh's door and, coming in, announced that two gentlemen were inquiring for him below.

"Please ask if one is called Braithwaite, Mrs. Wyatt," said Hugh, "and if that is so, just ask them to come up and I will receive them."

When this message was delivered to the callers below they stared at one another in astonishment.

"Blow me!" said the detective, "but this is what you may call clairvoyance! Yes, ma'am, if you don't object, that is my name; a pretty name, too, I think, regular old English, Saxon, you know. Yes, ma'am, Braithwaite, at your service."

"Well, gentlemen, in that case, you are to walk upstairs, please, and you will find Mr. Desmond's door open before you."

"Thank you, ma'am, thank you," said Braithwaite; "your name is, I think,—not Spinks, eh? No?"

"Wyatt, if you please, sir," responded the landlady coldly, not appearing to admire the Bucket-like familiarity of this man, who was, despite his good raiment, assuredly not a gentleman.

"Wyatt! why bless me, that is a good old English name, too. Sounds aristocratic, very. After you, sir,"—and the Inspector yielded precedence to his companion.

The door on the second floor stood invitingly open.

"Come in, if you please," said our hero, just as the detective was going to knock. "Ha! Inspector Braithwaite!"

"Yes, sir; how do you find yourself, Mr. Desmond? Just a word, if you will allow me, before talking business. How the devil—I ask pardon—did you know that I was going to call on you?"

"I have an acquaintance, Mr. Braithwaite," answered Hugh, "who writes detective stories and narratives of daring highwaymen for the 'penny horrors,' as they are called. Well, I have heard him use the word 'shadowed' of a man being secretly followed by police spies. In St. John's Street I saw enough to convince me that you were 'shadowing' somebody, and by a very simple expedient I discovered that it was myself."

"Ah! I see," said Braithwaite. "We do sometimes overdo it, that's a fact. Two of our best men were after a notorious smasher\* last week. They knew he was hiding somewhere around Drury Lane. One evening they were going down Great Wild Street, and from habit they tried some of the doors and padlocks of the closed places as they went along. The very man they were after was looking at them from a garret window, and when he saw them trying the doors he knew they were detectives. He escaped of course, and was afterwards taken by some yokel of a country policeman."

"I presume you have not called to tell me this, Mr. Braithwaite," remarked Hugh. "You spoke of business. I hope I am not suspected of being a dynamiter or conspirator from America."

"Why, no, not exactly that, young gentleman. The case is—so far as I can at present describe it—one of kidnapping, or rather of removing a young lady from the custody of her relatives."

Hitherto the other man had not spoken, but he now interposed in a peculiar drawling tone.

"Aw,—ye-es,—precisely; and a very serious charge that is, of course."

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\* A counterfeiter.

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Desmond had seen this rather languid gentleman at Holmwood. He was a second cousin, or something even more remote than that, of Lady Blanche, his name and title being the Honourable George De Kenyon. Hugh now turned to this man and said, somewhat fiercely, for he was tired and annoyed :

"And you, sir, are doubtless one of the secret police also, I suppose?"

"By Gad! no. A policeman? No, I hope. I am a gentleman, sir. My name is De Kenyon."

"A gentleman keeps better company than that I see you in, sir," retorted our hero. "*Noscitur a sociis*, which I suppose you do not understand. Well, sir, it means, in our homely phrase, that 'birds of a feather flock together.' Whatever your business with me may be, express yourself briefly, or in my present humour I may expedite your departure by throwing you down stairs."

"Not quite so fast, my dear sir," said De Kenyon,—who was, after all, a gentleman,—“I ought to apologise for the presence of the detective. From the first, I told my cousin Robert,—that is, Major, formerly Captain, Meadows,—that this was no matter for the police, but he thought differently. He put the case in the hands of those Scotland Yard people, and strangely enough we found your address attached to a deposition made but two days since.”

The speaker hereupon offered his card to our hero, who at once asked him to be seated. The detective, without waiting to be asked, took a chair and laid his hat and stick on the floor.

"So far, Mr. De Kenyon," said Hugh, "I confess you mystify me. The detective alluded to the mysterious removal of a young lady from the control of her guardians, called it kidnapping, and you spoke of some serious charge. This detective Braithwaite is, I know—the very deposition you speak of might have shown you—a blundering fellow, so I attach no importance to anything he may say. But from you I have the right to demand an explanation."

"Wait a bit, my fine fellow; wait a bit," muttered the Inspector. "This 'ere gentleman's one of the upper ten, and you'll soon find which side is blundering."

"Silence, policeman, if you can," said De Kenyon angrily. "The fact is, Mr. Desmond, we must no longer play at cross

purposes like this. Allow me to ask you one question : Do you know where Lady Blanche Meadows is ? ”

“ Why, yes, sir,” returned Hugh, looking at his questioner with a smile, “ I think I do. This afternoon she was, with her attendant, at the Norwood private hotel, in the Adelphi. She has apartments there, I believe. But I am anxious to know who has been kidnapped, and who is charged with the serious offence you spoke of.”

“ I beg your pardon : the Norwood, Adelphi, I think you said ? Ah, yes, I thank you,” said De Kenyon. “ I see how it is, quite ; and the lady is of age ; yes. Mr. Desmond, I am obliged to you for the address, and I must again apologize to you for this intrusion.”

“ Just one moment, if you please, sir,” said Braithwaite. “ I think the Major commissioned you to make a certain proposition.”

“ You are quite right, officer, quite right,” said the other. “ I protest it escaped me. Mr. Desmond, will you pardon the liberty if I request the favour of a few words over by the window.”

Desmond gave a nod of acquiescence, and the two gentlemen moved to the window.

“ It is a delicate, an infernally delicate thing to have to do,” said De Kenyon, who had lost much of his general languor during the interview ; “ but the fact is, Mr. Desmond, I can put ten thousand pounds to the right side of your bank account if,—if,—”

“ Spare yourself the ignoble duty which your friend has imposed upon you, Mr. De Kenyon. I know what you would say,—if I will renounce his sister, Lady Blanche. However much he may love his sister, the honourable and gallant Major,—as they say in Parliament,—is willing to sacrifice ten thousand pounds, not to save the family honour,—for I am of as good stock as his own,—but to save the family pride. No more of this, Mr. De Kenyon, unless you would gratuitously insult me in my own apartment.”

“ I have no desire to do so, I assure you,” returned the other. “ I have executed my mission fairly, according to promise.”

“ You will find Lady Blanche at the house I have mentioned,” said Hugh, “ if you wish to see her. I know she has already written to Lord and Lady Guisborough ; but if you



have a message for her, why I think you had better take a cab there at once. At the same time, I must request you, as a gentleman, not to take that police officer with you."

"My dear sir," replied De Kenyon, "I have no business with or message for my cousin Blanche. Not for the world would I approach her as Bob's herald. She always made fun of me; and I detest these clever women, blue-stock—I beg your pardon!—don't you know?"

Desmond smiled at the honest signs of fear exhibited in Mr. De Kenyon's countenance. It was evident enough that he retained a wholesome remembrance of certain interviews with his cousin and of her satirical power; indeed Mr. De Kenyon was often enough a butt for ladies' sarcasm. He had, at the suggestion of the Hon. Major Meadows, undertaken this embassy, in utter ignorance of Hugh Desmond, of whom he knew merely that the Major had termed him a "snob." He was surprised to find that he had a gentleman to deal with, and it is but fair to add that having made the discovery he immediately recognized the absurdity of persisting any further in what our American cousins call the "bluff game."

"Well, Inspector," he said to the detective, "I have executed my commission. You see the lady is of age, free to go where she will; and we have been foolish to have anything to do with the business. Mr. Desmond, allow me to bid you good evening."

Mr. Braithwaite did not look particularly good-natured as they left the house, although it is not improbable that he was certain to be paid for his services in attending the Major's friend. The street lamps were lit, evening having fallen, and as the two men emerged into the street they encountered a nondescript sort of fellow who looked half sailor, half beggar. The man really seemed about to ask charity, when Mr. Braithwaite seized him by the shoulder and brought his face toward the light.

"Now look here," he said, "none o' that here. Perhaps you know me, perhaps you don't. Be off with you!" and the dejected nondescript hurried off. "There, sir," continued the Inspector, "he knows I have some connection with the law. We shall find a cab in the next street, sir."

The supposed beggar, however, soon cast off his air of dejection as he pursued his way to Rosoman Street. Once he

clenched his fist at a thought which we may here express, but which he carefully kept to himself however——

"Aha! Mr. Hugh Desmond on good terms wid Scotland Yard and visited by detectives! Well, we have got Martin Walsh in hidin' for the present; but who can say how long before this bloody informer will go back to the ould castle? Faix, it was heaven's own providence that sent me to Whitehall the night he arrived from Ireland, so that I saw him enter the Yard in a coach. Begorra! I must watch the *gossoon* pretty closely; and to think that Father Lawrence had no suspicion at all, at all!"

Had Lieutenant Wallace chanced to be in Clerkenwell instead of down in Tormavy, and had he met this wayfarer in Rosoman Street, it is well-nigh certain that his excellent memory for faces would have enabled him to recognize, in spite of his disguise, the furtive eyes and strongly-marked lineaments of Pat Shine, of Inniscarra.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WHEREIN THE CHAPLAIN TAKES THE HELM.

THE announcement by Blanche Meadows of her approaching marriage was made at the very zenith of the part-ridge shooting. The Earl of Guisborough, his son, the Hon. Major Meadows, and the chaplain were, a few mornings after the occurrences narrated in the previous chapter, engaged in the library at Holmwood in discussing what steps should be taken with a view to averting, if possible, the conclusion upon which this headstrong maiden seemed at present so resolved.

"There," said the Major, "you have heard what De Kenyon writes. The adventurer is, it seems, a very Quixotic fellow,—not over wise, perhaps, to refuse ten thousand pounds. There is a story going the rounds at Brook's and the Army and Navy that this knight of the rueful countenance horsewhipped an Irish gentleman the other day. I'll tell you what, you must try some other dodge, you know. Go at him impressively, with rank, religion, station in life, and all that, you know. If that should fail, why then let him and Blanche go to the devil together."

"Something like this is, I think, the very best course that your lordship can adopt," said the priest.

"It is, at all events, the only and the last resource we have," replied the Earl: "we will, since authority proves ineffectual, try persuasion. Therefore, we shall have to go to town at once."

"Confounded bore, no doubt," said the Major, "but it must be done."

"During the journey to London Father Nevins elaborated and explained a plan of operation to which the Earl assented and from which he hoped a good result would arise, although the chaplain thought it necessary to advise his patron not to be too sanguine.

"I have already told your lordship," he said, "that this Desmond is one of those of whom it is said that although you may lead them they cannot be driven. Your lordship has exercised as much pressure as lay within your power,—I mean paternal pressure, of course,—upon Lady Blanche without, so far as it appears, weakening her infatuation for the man. Let us now try the *suaviter in modo*, and that the more readily because the times do not admit of the *fortiter in re*."

Whether his remembrance of Desmond's scornful treatment of himself on the night of the discovery at Holmwood stimulated and inspired his zeal, this chronicle deponeth not, but it is certain that Father Nevins soon contrived to prepare his springes. Lady Blanche had been in town scarcely a fortnight when the chaplain, accompanied by another gentleman of his cloth,—who was secretary to the Archbishop,—called at her hotel and requested to see her ladyship. On being shown up, the reverend gentlemen,—or at least Father Nevins,—looked somewhat disconcerted when they found that Lady Blanche was not alone, there being present Mary and Nellie Curtin and two gentlemen, one of whom was our hero.

The prelate's secretary being already known to her ladyship, Mr. Nevins was all the sooner able to explain his presence at the hotel.

"I am authorized," he said, "by the Earl of Guisborough to request that your ladyship will be present at an amicable conference,—a sort of select drawing-room meeting, I may say,—and his reverence here indulged in a soft and rather fawning laugh,—to which Mr. Hugh Desmond has been, or will be,

also invited," and he bowed to our hero, who returned the courtesy.

"If there be anything more you would like to add, sir," said Lady Blanche, "please announce it now without reserve."

"There is nothing more, Lady Blanche, except that I may venture to express the hope that the conference will result satisfactorily to—to his lordship,—whose parental prerogatives we must all consider,—and also to your ladyship's *ultimate* happiness."

"Just a word, if you please, Mr. Nevins," said Desmond. "If I understand you, the invitation to myself has been posted——"

"It was, sir, last night," observed the priest.

"So that," continued our hero, "it is now, in all probability, at my lodging. Permit me to say that I will not fail to be present."

"Yet," said Blanche, "unless I am strangely forgetful, it seems to me that Mr. Nevins has omitted some few particulars of time and place. Did you specify these? I think not."

"Really, upon my word, I forgot; and I beg your ladyship's pardon. The mistake arose from my having specified the time and place in the note sent to Mr. Desmond. Pardon me,—the place is his lordship's house in town, the time two in the afternoon. I would like to be in a position to announce to the Earl that your ladyship will be present."

"I will be present," she said; "but as you appear to have managed this matter, at least in a great measure, yourself——"

"Nay, my lady, not quite so, I assure you: his lordship and Major Meadows have authorized me to act in the case."

"Precisely, I understand," she answered, "because papa knows how futile it would be to look to Robert for a suggestion of any kind outside the covers or the stable. He has had to rely on you, and you have done your duty. But I was about to ask if mamma,—if Lady Guisborough is in town."

"Her ladyship is at Holmwood," said the chaplain, "she cannot be present."

After the departure of this sacerdotal plenipotentiary, Desmond looked somewhat grave. "My love," he said, as Blanche turned her eyes toward him, and placed her hand in his, "I am afraid that you will have a trying ordeal before you to-morrow. I fancy they will make it as theatrically

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impressive as they possibly can make it; you will be tried from every standpoint; and even,—which I do not for a moment doubt,—though they fail either to cajole or to frighten you, they may make sad havoc with your nerves. Do you think yourself quite strong enough for such a trial? Remember, Mrs. Curtin will not be there;—you will be without an ally."

"But you will be there, dearest," she replied, with a glance of unutterable love and confidence, "and I shall not be afraid. It is their last effort, and doubtless they will make it as effective as possible. The presence of Seldon, the Archbishop's secretary, made me surmise that poor papa will bring ecclesiastical influence to bear. For myself, I can laugh at all such,—but how is it with you, dearest? Are you sure that your mind is free, that you can regard all these things with indifference? Pardon the question! but oh, Hugh, you have been, you have told me, so fierce a zealot for this Church! Are you free?"

"Free and disenthralled, my love, completely so," he said. "I will not say that I am, at present, happier for the new light that has risen on my mind; but I am free."

"In time peace of mind will be attained," she observed, "for how can it be otherwise when we follow Truth? However, our friends there are beginning to yawn with ennui, let us join them."

William Curtin and his wife were seated on a lounge near the door, while Nellie was working diligently with her needle at some mysterious production of the art sutural.

"I have been saying," said the reporter, when Blanche and her lover approached, "that both Father Seldon and Father Nevins were apparently astonished to find me here. You will find that I shall be asked to the Archbishop's house before this day is over. Nothing of the most trifling nature escapes him; he is a great man."

"Not so great as he would have seemed three or four centuries ago, my friend," said Desmond, knowing well to whom Curtin alluded. "In our day almost every parsonage in the country has his equal in learning, and his well-known genius for intrigue can find but a poor field for its exercise in a country where only the most despicable statesmen would seek to enlist the Papacy on their side as an instrument in the game of politics."

The reporter's conjecture was in some measure verified, for, in the afternoon, when Curtin was engaged in the office of his principal, at the corner of Catherine Street, the Rev. Father Seldon dropped in, ostensibly to see Mr. Walters. After a few minutes of general conversation with the latter, the priest said :

"By-the-bye ; could I see you for a few minutes alone, Mr. Curtin ? Not,"—he remarked deprecatingly to the principal, who looked surprised,—“not on any professional business, Mr. Walters, but there are a few small personal trifles that I think your assistant can help me in.”

William Curtin,—craftier for his friend's sake than he would have been for his own,—wore an expression of expectant surprise as he led the way into an inner room.

"I will not detain you long, Mr. Curtin," said the secretary, taking the chair offered him. "The fact is, I was very much astonished to find you at that hotel in the Adelphi this morning, very much so. May I ask if you were there in a professional capacity ? or do you know the young man who—who—this Mr. Desmond, in fact ?"

"Know him, Father Seldon ? why of course I do. He is the critic and reviewer of the *Herald*, and he lodges in the same street with me."

"Oh, indeed ! I did not know that," said the priest. "Was it he who wrote that notice of Dr. Wordsworth of Lincoln's Latin verses to the 'Old Catholics,' and who made so much fun out of the idea of an elderly Protestant gentleman of the schoolmaster type speaking of his duties at Lincoln as *officii Pontificalis onus* ?"

"Yes, Father Seldon, that was Mr. Desmond's work. The Taintors think very highly of him."

"No doubt ; I am glad to hear it, Mr. Curtin ; he is certainly an able writer ; but what do you think of the lady—a, what's her name ?"

"The lady upon whom you called to-day ?" asked Curtin innocently ; "why, then, your reverence, she is, if I may say so, a grand lady, and I should not be surprised if Mr. Desmond fell head over ears in love with her yet. Her name is Meadows, I think, but your reverence already knows her. I suppose she is wealthy, Father ; so if Mr. Desmond is lucky there he need only write for pleasure," and the reporter laughed."

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The priest, somewhat hastily concluding that William Curtin knew nothing of Desmond's affairs and that, therefore, it was no use to "pump" him any farther, said :

"Yes, Mr. Curtin, she is, I think, fairly well to do in the world. Ah, well! I am glad to hear this account of the young man: it is encouraging to know that the Catholic press of London possesses such religious and talented writers. Permit me to congratulate you on the extremely faithful report of the Archbishop's address at the Tower Hill meeting. It was a grand, an affecting demonstration."

William Curtin did not give expression to the idea suggested by Father Seldon's remark respecting the talent employed on the Catholic press; but he could not avoid wondering within himself why it was that the ablest, most profound and most theological leader-writers and reviewers in London, many of whom he had seen and heard in the Temple Forum and elsewhere,—sometimes indeed in a state of Thracian happiness,\*—were, almost without exception, so remarkably, so ostentatiously irreligious.

That evening, as they leisurely strolled through the Temple Gardens on their way to Clerkenwell, the reporter told Desmond of the interview.

"What puzzles me entirely," said William, "is that Father Nevins should have brought the Archbishop's secretary with him to-day on an errand which I consider a delicate private affair. You may depend upon it that the Archbishop will do what he can to influence either you or Lady Blanche."

"I should certainly have thought that the Earl was too proud a man to appeal to the clergy for assistance in such a case," replied Hugh, "but when the false pride of prejudice is aroused it sometimes obscures manly feeling and generous promptings. I have, I think, aristocratical leanings in so far as I have always associated aristocracy with high principle, integrity, and a detestation of what is mean, sordid, or base. I confess, now that I find an English nobleman relying on a priest to influence his daughter's freedom of action, and that nobleman's son and heir condescending to offer a bribe and to anticipate that it may be accepted, at the sacrifice of his sister's purest, finest affections,—aye, and perhaps the wrecking

† This is delicate ground, respected reader, for your knights of Grub Street are vengeful and potent withal. Therefore, as the great orator said of Verres, *Sileatur de nocturnis ejus bacchanionibus ac vigiliis.*

of her life, for such steadfast natures are permanently injured by deception,—I am almost inclined to turn Radical."

"Or, at any rate," said William, "to read with satisfaction those articles in the *Evening Journal*\* in which '*Noblesse Oblige*' shows us what our modern aristocracy is made of."

"Curtin," said Hugh, "here comes the very man that was arrested as a dynamiter. Why, Mr. Wiltshire! I am really glad to see you. My friend Mr. Curtin—Mr. Wiltshire."

"How do you do, sir?" said Wiltshire to Curtin. "As for you, Mr. Desmond, well I am half inclined to pick a quarrel with you. Why, man, do you know that you never told me where you live, and I have been hunting all over London to find you? Only to-day I met Macmurdoch, the music-hall idol,—happened to speak of my arrest,—mentioned your name as that of a friend in need, found out all about you, and was just going to Gloucester Street. Ha! there is Chancery Lane. Shall we drop in at the Mitre?"

They did as Wiltshire suggested,—indeed, such suggestions are almost invariably acted upon all over the civilized world. Wiltshire was in high good humour.

"You will be surprised to hear," he said, "that I have been taken on the staff of the *Sun*. I met Lacy, the journalist, the other day. He writes for *Punch*, and is also on the *Sun*. 'Hallo! Wiltshire,' he cried; 'why, I thought you were dead long ago.' 'No,' said I, 'not quite so bad, old fellow; only banished.' 'Banished?' says he, 'why, where have you been all this time?' I said in America, trying to make a fortune as a *litterateur*. 'God help you!' said Lacy, 'did the Yankees know you were poor?' Of course, I said, there was no disguising the fact among a set of fellows who squandered money like princes, and who talked only of dollars and of such indulgences as dollars could procure. 'God bless my soul!' says Lacy, 'whatever prompted you to leave England? Had you been famous here before you left, whether as poet, philosopher, novelist, dramatist, sword-swallower, or aristocratic libertine, all America would have welcomed you, and petted you, and some millionaire would have given you his daughter to wife. But perhaps you have made your fortune, Charlie?' he asked. I told him, if so, it was but a ragged

\* The English reader, who knows London, will understand the allusion and will pardon the anticipation in point of date. The chronicler is indebted to "*Noblesse Oblige*" for the removal of some illusions.

one, I was afraid. Well, the long and the short of it is, that Lacy got me on the *Sun* as dramatic critic. Sometimes I pinch myself to make sure that I am awake."

"I am very glad to learn of your good fortune, Mr. Wiltshire," said Desmond, "and I hope nothing will ever tempt you to leave England again in search of some fabulous El Dorado! It is always painful when we see those who have gone forth for wool coming home shorn."

"But surely, sir," said Curtin, "your luck might have been different. Many from my own city have gone to America and have done well. Sure, my own wife's first cousin is a police captain in New York, and has over two thousand dollars a year."

"That is not quite four hundred pounds of our money," said Wiltshire, "you will remember. The dollar as a unit of value lends itself well to the gratification of vulgar pride. In the United States that man is a millionaire, and is worshipped as such, whose whole fortune, if expressed in English pounds, would scarce equal the annual rent-roll of many an English nobleman. Mr.—a—Curtin, I think, is the name?—in one sense you are right. Will you pardon me if I say that, had I a little of that rich brogue which you still retain, I could do well in America?"

Curtin laughed at this, but in such a way as to show that he fully understood what Wiltshire intended to convey. Hugh, however, apprehending that something too markedly personal might ensue between these two intensely national men, interposed.

"The truth probably is, friend Wiltshire," he said, "that you were not successful in America mainly because you accentuated the fact that you were *all* English. I would explain this philosophically, but you would think me pedantic. Yet it seems funny that the moment you land in Europe you should be mistaken for an Irish-American."

"Very true," said Wiltshire, as they left the house; "very true; but do you know I really am convinced that this suspect Walsh came over with me in the *Scythia*. I often noticed a man of about my age and appearance among the steerage passengers. I saw him on shore in Queenstown, in company with a villainous-looking fellow, and it must have been about that time that the detective made his first blunder.—What the devil do you want?"

This extraordinary conclusion of his discourse was occasioned by the somewhat erratic conduct of one of the match-vendors who abound in the more frequented streets of London. The fellow, who was apparently well advanced in years, was pressing up close behind the trio as they walked swiftly toward Holborn, and Wiltshire,—who was by no means a dreamer, but who had eyes for all around him,—thought the fellow's conduct looked suspicious, as indeed it did.

"What the devil do you want?" he asked, suddenly turning and confronting the man, who slunk back as though expecting a blow.

"Lights, gentlemen, lights!" he whined in a husky voice; "lights, two for a penny!"

"No," said the other, "and be off with you, or you may be taken for a pickpocket."

The match-vendor hurried off in the opposite direction and was soon lost to view.

"Singular," said Desmond, as they resumed their walk, "but it seems to me that I have seen that man before, in some other guise than that."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Wiltshire, "you may be right, for hang me if it's not the very fellow that I saw talking in Queenstown with Walsh. He is some kind of a police spy, depend upon it; but no, scarcely in such a disguise; they are not sharp enough for that. Pshaw! let him go to the devil; you may be sure I shall never be arrested for Walsh the dynamiter again."

They had by this time arrived opposite Gray's Inn Lane, where Mr. Wiltshire was to take an omnibus. Before they separated, he assured Hugh that he intended to call on him soon, and he gave our hero a cordial invitation to spend as much time as he could spare in the little cottage at Wanstead.

Mrs. Wyatt was removing the tea-tray after on that evening when she was summoned downstairs by a second-floor bell, and soon after a card was presented to our hero on which was inscribed the name, "W. Gordon-Garden." Having been shown up, it appeared that the owner of this compound appellation was a rather dignified-looking, middle-aged man.

"Thank you, sir!" he said, as Hugh offered him a chair; "I will not detain you long. Permit me to apologize for this method of introduction. I know Mr. Flowers, of Holmwood Hall, quite well; in fact, I assisted him in the compilation of

that laborious but neglected work, 'The History of the Tractarian movement.' Well, sir, I myself am,—ahem!—a literary man, an author in some sort, my immediate work being a classified list of converts to Rome. I have already more than three thousand names of Protestants who have been recently converted,—of course with such details and minutiae as I have been able, with the permission of the persons mentioned, to collect. I have learned from Mr. Flowers that you, sir, are also a convert,—from Anglicanism I think? ah, yes, precisely,—and I shall have great pleasure in adding your name to the List. I should say that the book will be a royal sextodecimo, bound in cloth and richly gilt."

Desmond could scarcely suppress a smile at the idea of so extraordinary a work being prepared.

"I assure you, Mr. Gordon-Garden," he said, "that I have no desire to figure in your book. Circumstances indeed have rendered it—pshaw! why should I conceal it?—the truth is, sir, I am a Catholic no longer."

"Indeed, Mr. Desmond, that makes no difference, I assure you, my object being to——"

"Yes, yes, my dear sir, I quite understand," said Hugh, "your only care is to swell your list; the after-fate of your converts being no concern of yours. Well, sir, I request you to make no mention of me in your book. I am not a Catholic, indeed not a Christian at all."

"Pardon me, Mr. Desmond," returned the other, "but I would suggest that having once been baptised you are a Christian, ay, even in spite of yourself. But may I ask, before I go, what you call yourself now, sir, if not a Christian? Surely, not an Atheist, Mr. Desmond?"

"Not an Atheist in the ordinary sense of the word, my good sir," replied our hero, "for I hold it impossible to affirm the non-existence of a Supreme Being. Let me say, however, that despite the limitations of my nature, my religion is yet as high as the universe."

"Yes, I see, you are a Pantheist," said the other complacently, "but you will come back, sir, you will come back. Good evening, Mr. Desmond," and he left the room.

Strangely enough, in the first edition of the classified List our hero's name appeared as a convert to Romanism, among nearly four thousand other names. The reviewers termed it a "significant compilation"—significant of what!

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## WHEREIN OUR HERO WIELDS A POKER.

AS he entered the hall of the Earl of Guisborough's mansion on the day appointed for the conference, a flood of recollections rushed over Desmond's brain. All that had transpired since his foot first crossed the threshold of this lordly house,—the events and experiences that had, as it were, prematurely virified\* him,—came to his memory like a flash. There was the portrait of the ruddy-faced Colonel Meadows still staring and frowning, looking very much as though too long indulgence in the custom of drinking healths "over the water," coupled with a series of political disappointments, had induced hypochondria and hepatic disease. Instead of the respectable undertaker-like domestic who, as the patient reader will doubtless not have forgotten, acted as usher when first Hugh Desmond stood within this hall, there were now, however, two gorgeous flunkeys, one of whom conducted him into a magnificently-furnished drawing-room. As the door was thrown open, Hugh discovered that nothing had been neglected in the effort to produce a striking and formidable effect upon his mind. Let the psychologists explain it if they are able, but our hero knew instinctively that all this display of rank, wealth and power was intended for him alone. Father Nevins was standing close to the door, and he it was who directed Desmond to a chair. Hugh's bow upon entering included the whole of those who were present in its almost Castilian sweep, but his eyes rested for a moment upon Lady Blanche, who was sitting beside her brother and Father Seldon, with Mr. De Kenyon standing in the rear vigorously polishing his eye-glass, presumably with the laudable intention of staring our hero out of countenance.

Hugh had seated himself on a sort of semi-developed chair, complete as to legs, body and cushion, but destitute of a back, that stood beside an ornate fire-place, or old-fashioned hearth, whose beauty arrested the young man's attention. Upon two pillars and pilasters of white marble stood a finely-carved chimney-piece of the same material, the whole being the work of the most celebrated sculptor of the Georgian era. The

\* Honoured reader, for want of a suitable term in this English tongue of ours, the chronicler maketh "virified" from "vir" (Herr hero, a man).

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dogs or andirons on the hearth were of Italian workmanship, while the polished steel appurtenances shone like burnished silver. Having rapidly surveyed the room, which was certainly the finest he had ever seen, Desmond turned his attention to its occupants, who were all arranged in grand session before him. By far the most prominent of these was an elderly ecclesiastic, whose apparel would have indicated his position or station in the Church, even though his features had not been as widely recognizable as those of Queen Victoria herself. It was, indeed, the whilome Archdeacon of the Church of England, who by virtue of having disregarded his sworn declaration "that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State or Potentate hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm," had now become one of the most trusted, as he was one of the most astute officers of the Church of Rome, and director and agent-in-chief of the new Papal aggression in England. This was he to whose "mind and will,"\* conjoined with those of the Jesuits, the world was in 1870 mainly indebted for the successful promotion of the dogma of Papal Infallibility.

This was he who in 1851 joined the ranks of those seceders from the English Church, that Church whose "breasts have, for thirty years, been pierced mainly by the children whom they had fed,"† and who had since then had his ambition gratified by the attainment of a dignity in the alien communion higher by far than he would probably have reached had he remained faithful to Anglicanism.

Those who knew him well,—and these were few, mainly among his quondam "chums" at school or comrades at the University,—divined that his nature was not one to be content even with the honours already attained; beyond the pallium was the scarlet hat, beyond that hat the tiara. In person he was rather under the middle height, but his extreme meagreness of flesh, not to say positive emaciation, rendered this less evident. Assuredly he was one whose physique would have prompted any modern Cæsar to exclaim, "Would he were fatter!" Among Roman Catholics it was popularly reported that the Archbishop's abstemiousness amounted to

\* Vide Pomponio Leto, "Eight Months at Rome," July, II., 4th Session.

† W. E. Gladstone, "Vaticanism," Introduction. The complaint is such as a loyal, loving son of that Church would naturally utter.

absolute asceticism, and this reputation,—just as in the days when ambitious prelates were careful ever and anon to disclose the fact that they wore a hair shirt,—considerably added to his reputation, especially among the Irish colony in London, the Irish being even greater hero-worshippers than are the Americans, although generally somewhat more exacting and scrupulous in their standard of measurement.

Finding the seat he occupied rather uncomfortable because of its position, Hugh Desmond took a chair near the middle of the room. As he did so, a look passed between the Earl of Guisborough and the Archbishop, and the latter, turning toward the chaplain, said :

"I think I may assume that the gentleman who just now entered is Mr. Desmond. If so, then I suppose nothing need delay our proceedings."

"Yes, your grace," said the chaplain, "that is Mr. Desmond."

The prelate while speaking kept his keen grey eye on our hero, and Mr. DeKenyon, having, as artillerists say, got his eye-glass into position and found the range, was also staring in the same direction. On ordinary occasions it was not easy to divine Desmond's thoughts from his expression when *pros to prosopon*, and the hierophant, when Hugh calmly looked toward him, was fain to acknowledge to himself that he had seldom seen a more inscrutable countenance. Those two men, the one young, the other verging upon old age, were,—each in his own peculiar personality,—imposing, and instinctively felt that they were to be the chief actors in the proceedings. Already Desmond had begun to think that the extreme solemnity and severity of demeanour assumed by all present boded unfavourably to the amicable termination of the conference, and he even imagined that the flunkys in the hall had displayed a little of that offensive pertness which servants in aristocratic houses will sometimes show. The omission by Father Nevins of the customary form of presentation was a trivial slight which Hugh willingly accepted, since it spared him the ordeal of pretending not to understand that the faithful Catholic always on such occasions kneels and kisses the episcopal ring, while it demonstrated that the Earl and his advisers had so far condescended as to endeavour to impress and awe the young man by means savouring of vulgar ostentation and an assumption of arrogant pride.

Turning his look for a moment in the direction of the Earl, the Archbishop began.

"It is," he said, in his most mellifluous accents, "not necessary, I think, that any explanation should be given of the events which have led to this gathering, because in the main they are known to us all. While we ought to, and must, acknowledge our common brotherhood and, indeed, equality in the sight of God, whose children we are, and while recognizing that we are all equally dear to our Mother, the Church, we must also, as good Christians and faithful Catholics, remember that in civil society, as in the Church, there are differences of rank and of station, and that even mere human reason assures us that these various orders must exist; for without them there would be neither subordination nor obedience,—indeed nothing but anarchy. In youth, we are often inclined to scoff at and rebel against this partition into classes, because youth is the season when the intellect is subordinated by the imagination, so that persons of talent, of genius, are then fond of indulging theories of universal emancipation from poverty, of the inauguration of an era of equal rights,—liberty, equality, fraternity, and so forth. There is only one society or organization upon earth that can always be trusted to restrain the not fully developed mind from the consequences sure to result whenever and wherever these promptings of an exalted imagination are allowed scope in action. That is the Catholic Church. I will not enlarge upon this,—for my purpose is not to preach to you,—but I will ask the two young persons, for whose eternal and temporal well-being we are all so anxious, to reflect seriously,—the one ere she perhaps (which God forbid!) provokes a parent's dismissal without his blessing; the other ere he incurs the great and heavy responsibility of contracting an alliance with one beyond his station, the consequences of which would not, as he must bear in mind, be his elevation above the position allotted by the Almighty but would most assuredly abate and diminish the estate and position of his partner. Therefore, I must, in the name of all present, distinctly assure Mr. Hugh Desmond,—whose talents we gladly recognize, and who has already used his sword right well on behalf of religion,—that should he exact from Lady Blanche the fulfilment of her pledge, and should she not withhold it, he would thereby cause her to take a step that could never be retraced."

Here the Hon. Robert Meadows interposed, taking advantage of a pause in the archiepiscopal appeal.

"Never be retraced," he said; "my sister would find her family wholly estranged. The young man is, I am led to understand, actuated by honourable sentiments, and he has ability which will ensure his success in life, if he prove himself a wise man. An alliance with our family would not benefit him,—quite the contrary. I tell you what, sir,"—and he strode forward to within a few feet of our hero, who regarded him with tranquil interest,—“I advise you to be careful; the proposition I made I will repeat; remember that it places within your grasp in one day such a fortune as few can accumulate after many years, scores of years, of toil and anxiety. It will open the world to you. What do you say to it?” and the Major pulled his long moustache.

"What do I say to it?" repeated Desmond disdainfully. "Merely this: that it could not have originated in the mind of an honourable man, a true gentleman; and therefore I am willing to believe that Major Meadows unthinkingly adopts proposals or schemes as they are suggested to him by advisers whose ideas with regard to human nature are based apparently on its assumed total depravity. Your proposition, sir, is a disgraceful one unworthy of one who wears his monarch's uniform. I claim the right, gentlemen,"—and Hugh's voice now sounded like a bell throughout the apartment,—“since I come here by special invitation, to be treated with courtesy and as a gentleman. If this right be found too difficult to be conceded by anyone present, I shall consider it due to myself to withdraw. Perhaps, Major Meadows, you will also see the propriety of resuming your seat. At present you stand uncomfortably near me, much as though you would, as a final resort, try a little physical force to coerce.”

While thus addressing the Hon. Robert Meadows, Hugh Desmond rose from his chair. He stood quite two inches taller than the Major, and it was evident to even the most cursory observer that the body of the younger man was as light and supple as steel. In a hand-to-hand contention, Desmond would have proved an antagonist such as those wonderful Indians of Fenimore Cooper's delightful "Leather-stocking" romances were wont to prove. Whether or not the Major had intended to try the effect of a little browbeating,—your *militaires* will hector now and then,—cannot be known;

at any rate, as Hugh confronted him, the Major slightly nodded, smiled grimly, and retired. Unless Rumour always lieth, many a Belgravian mansion has at times been turned into a pancratium, but the Hon. Robert Meadows knew better than thus to disgrace his father's house.

Our hero remained standing, but he waited patiently for the Archbishop to resume, if he felt so minded, his exhortation. At this juncture, however, a tall, somewhat corpulent, elderly gentleman with gold-rimmed eye-glasses and hair white almost as snow, approached and took the young man's hand in both of his own.

"Mr. Desmond," he said, "I am the Marquis of Uxbridge, a Cabinet Minister, you know, and an old diplomat. Let me urge you, as a patriotic Englishman, to consider that the peace of one of our oldest and most respected families,—of a house famed in our annals,—is at issue here. You are a gentleman, we all acknowledge that, but in this case your former position in the Earl's house necessarily places the affair in a special colour of its own, and would render such an alliance as that contemplated by my friend's wayward daughter a *mesalliance*. Let this consideration weigh with you, and upon my honour I will use all my influence to make a man of you. Come, listen to reason, that's a good boy!"

Hugh bowed to the Marquis who, relinquishing his hand, stood as if expecting a reply.

"Lord Uxbridge," said Desmond, "doubtless you mean well, and you speak very kindly, for which I thank you. I do not, however, consider this a case for the exercise of much diplomacy,—certainly not one for the interference of churchmen. Lord Guisborough knows that before I left Holmwood I declared to him that I would never relinquish the trust reposed in me by his daughter until the hour in which she should ask me to release her from the contract. If you taunt me with my origin, I will say but this,—that it has weighed but little on the lady's mind; if you speak of my poverty, I can only admit it, while hoping that it may not last very long—"

Here the Archbishop's secretary interrupted Hugh.

"If the gentleman," he said, with a smile of triumph, "has been building castles in the air, I am sorry for him. With permission of this noble company,"—here the saponaceous fellow turned his left hand outward from his chin, while he



made the sycophant bow of his tribe,—“I will read a telegram received this morning from Ireland, from the very place where this young man's hopes have probably been centred. Here it is: ‘*Inniscarra, Co. Carlow.—In reply, would say have resolved to make different testamentary dispositions. The young man is an enemy to Ireland. M. O'R. D.*’ Here is the telegram,—Mr. Desmond is at liberty to examine it.”

Without a word, although his face was flushing,—an ominous sign in men of his temperament, who do not grow pale when roused,—Hugh Desmond stepped forward and examined the paper. It was perfectly correct, to doubt its authenticity was impossible.

“Thank you!” he said, and was retiring to his chair when his eyes met those of his betrothed. In a moment, Blanche had risen from her seat, and the two stood together almost in the middle of the room. Linking her arm to that of Desmond, Blanche exclaimed in a defiant voice, but with her tones rendered almost husky with angry excitement:

“This farce shall last no longer! You have brought here these statesmen, churchmen, and all the others to witness your own discomfiture. For you, Robert, I have felt surprise that you should think your sister worth all this trouble; but other hands have pulled the strings. My father knows that Mr. Desmond has spoken the truth. I gave my love,—I am not ashamed to confess it,—unasked, and where I have placed it there it shall remain, though my father—”

“Hush, hush! my child,” said the Archbishop, “remember what you owe to—”

“Pshaw! old man,” said Blanche contemptuously, “spare your platitudes and chicanery for those who believe in them. I do not. We are,—Hugh Desmond and I,—something different from submissive superstitionists.”

The prelate almost leaped to his feet in angry astonishment at this outburst, while his eyes fairly gleamed with commotion. The Earl of Guisborough also arose, looking very pale, while Desmond, turning toward him, said:

“Lord Guisborough, you believe in God: well, ask yourself whether or not He has given me your daughter. That some malevolent impulse has come between me and my cousin in Ireland is evident,—I hope that you, sir, have a clear conscience in this respect. Blanche Meadows did not love me because of my expectations, and she will not care because a

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promised something unsought by me has been withdrawn ere it was bestowed."

"Love you?" shouted the Earl, now almost overcome with rage, "she shall not love a beggar! Unhand my daughter, fellow!"

"Hugh, dear," said Blanche, with wonderful coolness, "after this we can stay no longer. Let us go."

"I forbid my daughter to leave the house!" cried the Earl, trembling with excitement. "Robert, ring for assistance; we will use force."

Mr. De Kenyon and the Hon. Major Meadows sprang forward, the one apparently to gain possession of a bell handle by the fire-place, the other to forcibly detain his sister. With the agility of a panther, however, Hugh Desmond had rushed to the hearth and seized the bright steel poker before De Kenyon could reach the bell. With a wholesome dislike of such an instrument when wielded by an angry man, De Kenyon hurriedly retreated, so that our hero's left arm encircled Blanche's waist at the moment when the Major stretched out his hand to arrest his sister's progress. Hugh whirled his really formidable weapon as though it were a cane, and Major Meadows turned very pale and stepped back with an oath as the now thoroughly aroused lover swung the glittering steel within a couple of inches of that officer's head.

"Let no one who values his life attempt to stop us!" shouted Hugh. "No one has the least right to do so, as you all know, and I swear that whoever comes between us and the door shall be swept aside by this!" and still wielding the poker he triumphantly bore Blanche into the hall. With marvellous courage she bore up bravely, even ordering the servants to open the door for their egress, but almost before the cabman closed the door of his vehicle she fainted and fell in her lover's arms.

"Never mind, friend," said Hugh to the driver, "go as fast as you can to the nearest fountain. Get away from here at once."

Having freely bathed her forehead, the cabman soaking the handkerchiefs, Hugh was rejoiced to see Blanche return to consciousness, which she did with a sort of shiver that shook her whole frame. As they resumed their journey toward the Strand, Hugh drew her beautiful head to his bosom and said as gently as a maiden, "And now, my love, there is no one to

come between us ; for whatever Destiny may have in store, whether of good or of evil, we shall share it together. Are you content ? ”

“ Whither thou goest I will go, nothing but death shall part thee and me.” This was her answer, almost in the words of the Hebrew virgin of old. Desmond pressed his lips to the marble forehead, and his grasp tightened spasmodically at the thought that men had so recently been plotting to put them asunder. Arrived at the Norwood, he conducted her carefully up the staircase, for indeed she was almost incapable of exertion. Mrs. Curtin and Nellie were present to receive them, and to their hands and solicitude our hero consigned his treasure.

Upon leaving the hotel, Hugh heard the outer door swing when he was quite half-a-dozen yards up the street. Hearing a light footstep at the same time, and imagining that Nellie might have followed with a message, he turned around and found himself face to face with the Hon. and Rev. Richmond Kirke.

“ How do you do, sir ? ” said that gentleman ; “ I saw you escorting a lady up the stairs. I hope there was no accident. You see, many clergymen from the country stop at the Norwood while in town, and I have been executing a commission to one such from a mutual friend down in Essex.”

“ The lady had fainted shortly before, Mr. Kirke,” answered Hugh, hoping that the clergyman would be in a hurry to catch a train, as our hero was in no mood for conversation. But evidently Mr. Kirke was for the present superior to Time, for he kept pace with Desmond’s lingering footsteps.

“ Was the lady a relative of yours, Mr. Desmond ? ” asked the little man, full of interest.

“ No relative, Mr. Kirke,” said Hugh, adding, however, with a smile, “ but I hope she will soon be a connection. She is my promised wife, my dear sir,” he said, speaking this time with a purpose.

“ Well, I declare ! ” said Mr. Kirke, “ this will be news for the Toynbees, who are always talking about you and wondering that you keep away so long. Well, I never ! quite a coincidence. I declare I should like to tell Griffiths about this adventure.”

“ Griffiths ? ” inquired Hugh, struck with the name, “ is your friend called Griffiths, eh ? ”

"The Rev. Richard Lewis Griffiths,—yes, sir, he is at the Norwood, and will probably stay there at least a fortnight. Shall I make you known to each other?—delighted to, I'm sure."

"Thank you, Mr. Kirke, not now," said Desmond, "because I think I know Mr. Griffiths already; and I hope to introduce myself to-morrow." They separated at Somerset House, each taking his respective conveyance. Despite the exciting events of the day, our hero did not feel much like a victor. His cup of joy might have been full, except for that telegram from his cousin Maurice. What had alienated the Squire to such a degree as this? It was an annoying mystery, and a very depressing one too.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

QUID AGIS, DULCISIME RERUM?

AS our hero had surmised, Mr. Kirke's friend at the Norwood hotel was no other than the Rev. Richard Lewis Griffiths. The meeting of these two was an affecting one, for the old affection glowed within their bosoms. The good clergyman's emotion sparkled through his spectacles, as he seized his pupil by the hand.

"Why," he exclaimed, "you have grown into quite a *preux chevalier*. Upon my word you remind me of some of those portraits of Venetian nobles we encounter in the galleries. And you found I was here by accidentally meeting Mr. Kirke? Depend upon it, Hugh, that such meetings are not accidental but providential. And now that it has pleased God to bring us together after so many years, let me ask you to tell me if the awful and solemn step you took in changing your communion has resulted in the satisfaction of your intellect and your conscience. I think,—nay, I am sure,—that such a serious step can only be justified by the assurance of one's reason that in making the change one is following and obeying the Divine will that we should prove all things and follow in the direction of the higher knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

Desmond rather dreaded a theological discussion with his whilome teacher and pastor,—mainly because he foresaw that such a discourse would be only too likely to pain and grieve

the good man. Yet he saw clearly enough that the subject was unavoidable, and it seemed to him that he was only beginning to realize how intimately a man's position among his fellow-men depended upon and was affected by his opinions religious and theological, and perhaps political. He had not yet learned,—possibly he might never intimately understand,—that every generation of men has its condemned and dishonoured Christ-pioneers, toiling with bleeding feet along the heights where in the future the whole race shall march in joy and gladness of heart along the broad road of progress. Gentle reader, I, the humble recorder of this life-story, have some / little knowledge of this Via Dolorosa, and now that the end of my journey is drawing near, and the awful mist into which I must shortly vanish can be discerned rising from the bosom of the dark ocean of Eternity, I sometimes find myself looking back upon the rough road I have travelled in dubious wonder whether or not the marks of my painful progress,—the crimson wound-traces left on rock and gnarled root, will be noted by other wayfarers after the waters have closed above my head. The royal Preacher, "the son of David, King in Jerusalem," whose luxury and magnificence and encouragement of art and industry merely precipitated revolution and the disruption of the kingdom, truly declared that "There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after."

"The step I took, dear sir," answered Hugh, "was taken in obedience to the promptings of my conscience. Now that I have been able to study the inner life of Romanism the glamour has disappeared. Where I looked for certainty I have found uncertainty; where I expected security I have found that there is no solid foundation."

"I have long prayed that your eyes might thus be opened," said Mr. Griffiths; "'Look into the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged,' that is, return to the bosom of the Church of England, which has never been an apostate to the faith, never a maker of new doctrines, never a discourager and concealer of the revealed will of God."

While his old preceptor was speaking, the idea occurred to our hero that they were both,—each in himself,—representative men. The tall form, scarcely bent even at the approach of senectitude, the long, high forehead slightly flattened at

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the temples, the patriarchal beard of Mr. Griffiths, all bespoke the man of strong religious convictions, of pure moral character, and of vigorous thinking within a radius limited by prejudice rendered insurmountable by education. He was the exemplar of the Ages of Faith, the typical parish priest; knowing but little of the great outside world, but, oh, how tenderly skilful in applying to the bereaved and bleeding heart the simple balms and lenitives of the "antique world!" Desmond, seeing that Mr. Griffiths appeared to have concluded that his former pupil had resolved to return to the English Church, merely said:

"At any rate, Mr. Griffiths, I am no longer a Romanist; but in the multiplicity of jarring sects and systems one is driven to ask with Pilate, What is truth?"

"You are, however, already a penitent," said the clergyman, "and the first issues of grace are yours already. Go onward boldly, aye boldly, as to the home and arms of a loving Friend and Brother, who is always waiting to receive you and to supply your utmost need. Claim at His hands the Food which you have already found to be the highest support of our frail souls. Hugh, my friend,—nay, *gnesion teknon pistei*, my true son in the faith, as I may fairly call you,—do not delay this too long. Remember the centurion: 'Lord, I am not worthy . . . but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.'"

Hugh could not find it in his heart to inflict such a shock as he knew the announcement of his scepticism must of necessity prove to his dear old friend; and indeed under kindred circumstances the most zealous apostle of Reason might well be excused for keeping his apostolate in obedience.

"You have not yet," he said, "asked me what I am doing in London, although you knew, of course, that I had engaged my life as a Roman Catholic family."

"Yes, I knew where you had gone," answered the clergyman, "but I suppose that you have announced your change, and have therefore, had to leave the Earl's establishment."

"I have had to leave, indeed," said Hugh, "but not for the reason you suppose."

Our hero then narrated the true causes of his dismissal from Holmwood. As the story progressed Mr. Griffiths, moved to astonishment, rose from his chair, and thrusting his hands beneath the skirts of his long coat, stood with his back to the

fire, the while regarding his former pupil with dilated eyes expressive of the greatest wonder. Once, and once only, did the clergyman interrupt the narration.

"Yes," he said, "I always foresaw that you could not escape the greatest snare of the Tempter. This sexual love, or instinct, or passion is the special trial of that sanguine temperament which produces the very noblest types of humanity; types abounding in warm zeal, ardent devotion, and love for all that is truly great and good, with faith that shrinks not under difficulties. King David seems to be the grandest specimen ever presented to the world of this peculiar spirit; he was 'a man after the Lord's own heart,' yet he was one who fell terribly, and was again fully absolved. But, pardon me, Hugh, I will not offend again."

When our hero detailed his visit to Ireland and alluded to his cousin Maurice, Mr. Griffiths' eyes shone with pleasure. He was evidently glad to know that Hugh's future was secure from want and grinding penury. Rapidly but lucidly, Desmond proceeded, until he spoke of the Norwood as the place where Blanche had taken refuge.

"God bless me!" exclaimed his auditor, "in this very house? Can it be that the heroine of this romance is here?"

Desmond nodded smilingly, and then proceeded to narrate the events of the recent conference. When the name of the great Catholic prelate was mentioned, Mr. Griffiths resumed his chair, and sat "nursing his leg" until the story had all been told. Then he drew a long sigh of relief and said:

"You have borne yourself gallantly through a time of severe trial for so young a man. As to that renegade, that traitor, that Infallibility-promoter who out-Herods Herod in his antipathy to the innocents whom our true apostolic Church preserves or rescues from Rome, God be praised that such as he can no longer avail themselves of padded rooms, racks and thumbscrews! He is ambitious, they say, and will have his heart's desire gratified in that regard, but, thank God! the Church of England stands in the way of that conquest which he once fondly thought to be so imminent. England will never be Roman: thank God, that is reasonably certain."

"For which, Mr. Griffiths," said Hugh, "you must also thank the genius of the British and Anglo-Saxon races, which cannot tolerate foreign subjection or submit to any alien



jurisdiction, and secondly, the spirit of the age which is hostile to such claims and pretensions as those put forward by Rome."

"Very true ; quite so," said the clergyman, scarcely knowing to what proposition he was assenting ; "but, Hugh, I hope you will introduce me to Lady Blanche."

"I have often spoken to her of you, Mr. Griffiths," said the young man, "and when she knows who you are she will be delighted."

Hugh and his old preceptor dined at an Italian restaurant in the Strand, after which they strolled through the National Gallery, where Mr. Griffiths duly went into raptures over the quaint old saints with their *nimbi* and long delicate fingers. Returning to the hotel, our hero and the clergyman proceeded towards the apartments of Lady Blanche. They were admitted by Nellie Curtin, who contrived almost at one and the same time to dart a look of distrust and disparagement toward the parson and a glance of mischievous mystery upon Hugh Desmond. The room was lit by gas, and the lights of the chandelier in the middle were turned down very low. Hugh at once approached Blanche and said :

"My love, you have often heard me speak of Mr. Griffiths, to whom I owe it that I am not now a sailor in the merchant service. You have not forgotten the name, have you ?

"No, indeed," she replied, "you have painted him so distinctly and so lovingly that I almost seem to know him also. But what of Mr. Griffiths, dearest ? He is not dead, I hope."

"No, indeed, my love, not dead ; but he is here before you, and what is more he has been stopping at the Norwood about a week. Lady Blanche Meadows, my dear old friend the Rev. Richard Lewis Griffiths ; Mr. Griffiths, Lady Blanche Meadows."

"I am afraid," said the clergyman, "that the picture Mr. Desmond seems to have painted was of too flattering a nature to be considered a portrait. He was always, I remember, a little impetuous and inclined toward exaggeration."

"Indeed," said Blanche, "but are not such natures always fickle and changeable ? I hope Mr. Desmond is not so unstable as he is impetuous," she added with a smile.

"True love," observed Mr. Griffiths, "is never inconstant. You remember that elegant fragment of Carew's !

“ ‘ He that loves a rosie cheek,  
Or a coral lip admires,  
Or from star-like eyes doth seek  
Fuel to maintain his fires,—  
As old Time makes these decay,  
So his flames must waste away.

“ ‘ But a smooth and steadfast mind,  
Gentle thought and calm desires,  
Hearts with equal love combin'd,  
Kindle never-dying fires ;  
Where these are not, I despise  
Lovely cheeks, or lips, or eyes.’

I see you smile, Lady Blanche, at the idea of an old bachelor presuming to speak authoritatively on such a subject. Yet, as a Christian minister, you know, it is a part of my duty to exhort those who come to the altar to interchange their vows. The greatest of all Christian ministers was himself a bachelor, yet the world owes to him the grandest portrayal of the duty of a Christian husband to lay down, if necessary, his own life for the sake of his wife. Do you not remember the passage? the comparison with the Church has for all ages placed the Christian wife above all others. ‘Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it.’ This sanctification of marriage was a part of the great Potency which I would call the Enthusiasm of Humanity, and which our Lord first proclaimed among men. Yet its origin was the same with

“ ‘ The voice that breathed o’er Eden,  
That earliest wedding day,  
The primal marriage blessing,  
It hath not passed away.

“ ‘ Still in the pure espousal  
Of Christian man and maid  
The Holy Three are with us,  
The threefold grace is said.’

And this grace it is,” continued Mr. Griffiths, “that has regenerated man and society.”

Blanche Meadows bowed gravely. “It seems to me,” she said, “that every fair-minded person must acknowledge that Christianity has been a very important factor in ameliorating

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the domestic and social life of women. There are those who would apparently question or deny this, but there are fanatics everywhere. It is folly to cast away the pearls because of the refuse that encloses them."

"I perceive," remarked the clergyman, "that those grave and perplexing questions which, when I was young, were only discussed in secret, are now openly canvassed everywhere. It is not improbable that the movement Romeward, which has culminated and begun to weaken, will be succeeded by a manifestation of or tendency toward Infidelity. I am afraid that the drift of the surface-current of our time,—as shown by the myriad narrow-minded specialists and sciolists whose lucubrations may be found in almost all our magazines,—is toward Atheism. If so, and the direful teaching become popular, why then God help society! for the inevitable consequence must be Revolution and perhaps Anarchy."

"Yet, Mr. Griffiths," said our hero, "it would be quite a mistake, and that a serious one, to conclude that the theory of Evolution,—which, after all, is merely a theory, since up to the present time there is no absolute proof that man once had ancestors among other vertebrate animals,—is Atheistic. No one would repudiate this notion more vigorously than would Mr. Darwin, who distinctly avers that there is grandeur in the view that the Creator originally breathed the breath of life into a few forms or into one form."

"If I may say so," said Blanche, "the idea seems grand to me also,—the notion that from a beginning so simple such marvellous processes are being perpetuated and improved. Moreover, it is really, I think, possible for us by accepting Evolution to realize the meaning of the poet when he affirmed that 'all partial evil' is 'universal good.' I mean that, as Darwin says or suggests, it is satisfactory to know that out of the ceaseless struggle that we see going on everywhere throughout Nature, there directly follows 'the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving,—namely, the production of the higher animals.'"

"You will find, however," said Mr. Griffiths, "as you grow older, that the most complete and accurately-fitting theories can never compensate for the removal of God to a distance beyond human ken, to a region where our wants, our tears, our sorrows, are alike unheeded and unknown."

"Pardon me," observed Hugh, "but science has not, I think,

banished God. It has wonderfully supplemented the teaching of philosophy with respect to the littleness of man's anthropomorphic deities; but it has both exalted God and ~~man~~ by making the latter and all the universe one with the former. But, Mr. Griffiths, we will be perfectly frank with you. Lady Blanche and I have only recently entered upon a course of free investigation; that we have cast away the old moorings we know; but we cannot yet definitely point to the haven of conviction in which we shall ultimately anchor."

"I see, I see," replied the clergyman, "the natural mental fleeing from the protest against superstition and credulity. All this is inevitable when one first awakens to the true character of many of the claims and dogmas of Rome. Please God, you will both come out from the ordeal as gold tried in the furnace. I will not forget to remember you at the Eucharist."

Blanche bowed her acknowledgments to the simple-hearted minister whose faith,—however uncertain its foundation to the eye of reason,—was so child-like and unquestioning. She was almost moved to exclaim:

"O good old man! how well in thee appears  
The constant service of the antique world."

"There was nothing to gain, no desirable purpose to achieve by overturning such a faith as this and wrecking the hope founded thereupon. Had the clergyman been a younger man, capable of the phrontistic metamorphosis and able to find in the succedaneum ample incentive and encouragement, the case would have been widely different. As it was, she thought it better to turn the gentlemen's thoughts in another direction.

"Do you know, Mr. Griffiths," she said, "that I have reason to apprehend I have wrecked your pupil's chances in life?"

"Indeed?" answered the parson, his honest eyes twinkling through the lenses of his spectacles; "indeed? I cannot see how, with such an inspirer to noble effort by his side as my friend has chosen, his chances are at all imperilled."

"Thank you, Mr. Griffiths! although I am half tempted to consider you a most subtle and insidious flatterer. Really, however, they told us at the conference that the cousin in Ireland had resolved on other testamentary dispositions; in fact, they read to us his telegram, so there can be no error. Mr. Desmond has now no expectations from that quarter."

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"And yet," said our hero,—rather wondering that Blanche had chosen to speak of this,—“this headstrong, infatuated young lady is determined to unite her lot with—”

At this moment a slight knock was heard, the door was opened by Nellie Curtin, while Lady Blanche dexterously turned on the gas to its full capacity, and our hero started to his feet in the most pronounced astonishment when the light fell full on the pleasant face of his cousin Maurice, who was standing a little in advance of a much more stalwart, bronzed and bearded man, in whom Hugh recognized his father, Captain Patrick Desmond, of Torweston-on-Sea. For a moment the young man looked toward Mr. Griffiths, and following the direction of the clergyman's eyes, he found that Blanche was smiling very mysteriously.

“I see how it is,” he cried, “all this is a conspiracy. They have been here before, and this surprise was planned. Father,”—and Hugh grasped his father's hand and shook it vigorously,—“I am delighted to see you; cousin Maurice, welcome in your own language, as carved in the dining-room at the castle, ‘*Cead mille failthe.*’ Come, let me make known my old preceptor, Mr. Griffiths, I see you are the only two absolute strangers present. I thought from the first that some surprise was in store when Nellie admitted us,” he added, looking toward his betrothed.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

“How dost thou, Benedick the married man?”

“When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.”

SHOWING HOW MR. GRIFFITHS TIED A KNOT.

“HOW on earth did I find you? and where did I pick up your father?” said the Squire. “Well, cousin Hugh, you have a right to ask such questions, and I think I had better tell you. Last week the papers announced that the ‘*Boadicea*, P. Desmond, master,’ had arrived at Dundalk, with grain from Galatz, and I at once remembered that you



told me that your father had purchased four-sixteenths of a large new barque called after the British Queen. You cannot have forgotten that I inquired what difference there was between four-sixteenths and one-quarter, and you explained why it was that ship property was so distributed into shares. I went to Dundalk, found the ship, made myself known to my cousin, and we made up our minds to come upon you suddenly here in London, and astonish you very much indeed. We found your place in Gloucester Street this morning, but you were absent. The landlady, however, said we might find you a few doors higher up the street, and told us to ask for a Mr. Curtin. Well, we found Mr. Curtin,—and found him remarkably indisposed to afford us any information other than that he knew you. At last I said, 'Good heavens! man, do you take us for process-servers that you refuse to open that beautiful great big mouth of your own?' To this he gave a Scotchman's answer by asking if we had important business with Mr. Desmond. 'Look here, my friend,' I said, 'we are all Desmonds; this is his father, and maybe you have heard of myself, Maurice Desmond of Carrig Desmond?' Faith, when he heard this, Mr. Curtin was civil enough to ask us upstairs, where he gave us a hint or two that induced us to think that instead of our surprising you the astonishment would have to be all on our side."

"But Curtin brought you here, I am sure," said Hugh, "earlier in the afternoon. I mean you have been here before, to-day?"

"Never before to-day," replied Maurice, wilfully misunderstanding the question; "but we spent a couple of hours here very agreeably this evening, before you came. I proposed, or suggested, to Lady Blanche that it was not too late to modify her plans for the future, if she thought me at all preferable to my cousin, but all to no purpose. Captain Desmond, you see how it is; we are all here by a sort of destiny or preternatural impulse, just in time for the wedding,—even the minister has been provided."

"By an impulse from within ourselves," said Hugh's parent, "since it seems that neither of us was to be invited."

"Do not be unreasonable, father," observed our hero; "your last letter, from Constantinople, stated that you were to call at Falmouth for orders, and I have heard nothing from you since."

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"Quite right," said the Captain. "We were only a few hours at Falmouth, and our good cousin here came on board the *Boadicea* on the very day when I intended to send you a letter. He insisted that we should ascertain what you were doing here in London, and I have left the ship in charge of the first officer. 'Mr. Griffiths,' continued the Captain, addressing the clergyman, "I am very glad to meet you once more. You have probably no recollection of our first meeting. It was soon after I succeeded to the command of my first ship, the *Freedom*. I was going to Torweston from Plymouth in the coach. Some one of the passengers complained of dulness,—you know there are about fifteen miles of rough road there, sir,—and I, being young and overjoyed at my promotion, suggested that a song would relieve the tedium. To this you assented, and I sang the 'Bay of Biscay,' 'Death of Nelson,' and perhaps a few others."

"Oh yes, to be sure," replied Mr. Griffiths, "I distinctly remember it. Let me see, was I not asked to sing too?"

"There were some Bryanites with us in the coach," said the Captain, "and they all seemed to look upon songs as sinful. Your hearty laugh of ridicule rings in my ears now. You sang, and sang well, 'A wet sheet and a flowing sea,'—the British sailor's anthem. They told me that the frightful enormity of a Christian minister singing a song in public was often bitterly alluded to in the prayer meetings of the district."

While this reminiscence was being discussed, our hero said to Blanche:

"My love, you have seen my father; he is a plain man, self-educated, and with various evidences of his calling about him. What do you think of him?"

"He is altogether satisfactory to me, dearest," she replied.

"He has a certain air of subdued power and authority, respectable, no doubt, to his having been in command over others so long. Do you not think it comes from that?" she asked, looking towards the Squire.

"I do not question but that is the reason," answered Maurice. "He does not look so much like a Paladin in nineteenth-century costume as his son does, perhaps, but he has seen much of the world, and I find that he possesses a wide acquaintance in the literature of France, Spain and Italy."

"I am glad you came to London, cousin Maurice," said Hugh, "since it is necessary that this lady should as soon as possible be placed beyond the machinations of those who would coerce her, now that persuasion and cajolery, and even bribery, have been tried to no purpose."

"Something of this we learned from Mr. Curtin," said Maurice, "while Lady Blanche to-day spoke of a telegram from Carrig Desmond. I am sure that the Captain would like to hear as much of your story—your romance, I should say—as you care to tell, while the clergyman——"

"The main details are already known to Mr. Griffiths," said our hero; "but I will tell you what occurred at the conference where your telegram was brought into action."

"Go on, my boy, go on," observed the Squire, "we are all attention."

Once more, therefore, the story was narrated, and that almost without interruption, until Hugh spoke of the telegram from Carrig Desmond, when the Squire began to perambulate the apartment in great excitement.

"I cannot imagine," he said, "who committed the forgery, for such it was. I knew absolutely nothing of what was going forward. No communication of any nature ever came to me from any of the persons involved. You say the telegram made me speak of you as being an enemy to Ireland, eh?"

"The young man is an enemy to Ireland," said Blanche, "yes, those words I distinctly remember."

"It was either a plot of those meddling priests, or else Father Lawrence,—but no, I hate to think so badly of him. However, my dear young people, we all recognize the desirability of your immediate marriage, since nothing but that will, perhaps, induce the 'opposition' to practise a policy of non-interference. You see, gentlemen,"—addressing the Captain and Mr. Griffiths,— "they dare not attempt to withdraw a man's wife from her husband, therefore, when the marriage is over they must, *nolens volens*, acquiesce. Hugh tells me that he would have telegraphed to me before this except for that da—I beg pardon!—that forged telegram. However, here we all are, the license has been procured,—say, when shall it be? Let us settle it while we are here, for by St. Kevin! I am longing to kiss the bride."

Three days afterward, Hugh Desmond and Blanche Mea-

dows stood together, the one on the right, the other on the left hand, before the altar of a City church, not far from St. Paul's Cathedral. Mr. Griffiths, assisted by a curate belonging to the parish, officiated, while the Squire gave away the bride. It was, perhaps, the first time that Mary Curtin and her sister had witnessed any ceremony or service in an English Church, however the case may have been with William. Mr. Griffith's magnificent voice, cadence and intonation added additional beauty to a form which is unquestionably both solemn and affecting, even although, like so many marriages themselves, that form begins with "Dearly beloved" and ends with "amazement."

William Curtin, though he knew that both bride and bridegroom were pronounced Rationalists, saw that the service affected them very markedly. The little church was beautifully appointed throughout with the chaste propriety of a cultivated archæological taste. Very recently its rector had been temporarily suspended and subjected to much annoyance for his conscientious introduction of altar lights, of the practice of elevating the "elements" at the Eucharist, of mingling water with the wine in the chalice, and for making the sign of the cross. Unlike the evangelical or Low Church ministers, this gentleman did not shut up his church from Sunday to Sunday, and at almost every hour of the day the visitor would be sure to find some zealous, faithful Anglican, city-clerk or merchant,—your middle classes are always the most religious,—there on his knees. Thus it was that quite a small congregation was present at Desmond's wedding; some, doubtless, having been drawn thither by curiosity. Not far from the chancel three ladies, evidently pronounced churchwomen, took part in the service very devoutly. Two of them may be said to have belonged to the church, since they were the sisters of the absent rector; they were tall, sharp-featured spinsters, both on the shady side of thirty; but they were valuable auxiliaries to their brother in his labours among the poor. The third lady was of smaller figure, but her face was almost completely hidden by the pillar which threw its shadow between her and her companions, whose seats were nearer the middle of the nave. The names of the two sisters were respectively Miss Avis and Miss Eleanor Clynton, and prior to their brother's acceptance of the rectory of St. Ambrose's they had led quiet, secluded lives in the parent nest at Witham.

where their father had for upwards of forty years practised as a physician and surgeon, besides being also the family doctor at the Priory, the ancestral hall of the Kirkes, perhaps the most influential, and assuredly one of the wealthiest, of the great families of Essex.

To the spectator there is no part of the marriage service more interesting than when the principals plight their troth. Just as the Squire placed Blanche's hand within that of the clergyman, who in turn placed it in the right hand of the bridegroom, Miss Eleanor Clynton,—who, because she was at least two years younger, may be presumed to have been at least two years flightier and more inclined to look with pleasure at many little human vanities than was Avis,—bent her head in the direction of the above-mentioned pillar and said to the other lady :

"Miss Allyn, can you see well there? They are plighting their troth. See how pale she is, but she looks proud and very determined, I think. How self-possessed he looks. I declare his voice is like a bell : listen !"

"I, Hugh, take thee, Blanche, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

It is a simple, somewhat ungrammatical, yet most impressive formula. While Blanche Meadows in her turn repeated it, with the additional undertaking to *obey*, the rector's sisters were lost in admiration, so sweet and so silvery clear was her voice. This interest continued until the ring which symbolized their union had been placed on his wife's finger by Hugh Desmond, when Miss Eleanor Clynton, upon turning her head, was a little surprised to see that Miss Allyn was kneeling down before the officiating minister had uttered the words, "Let us pray." Little, indeed, did the good sisters suspect the nature of the conflict that was being waged within that gentle bosom, a conflict and a struggle which Edith had deliberately and of set purpose hazarded and demanded. She had only known the Clyntons since the persecution of their brother made him notorious. The Hon. and Rev. Richmond Kirke was a warm friend and admirer of the daring Ritualistic innovator, or rather restorer, and not less so because the latter was the son of the man whose services had been most in re-

quest at the time exigent when he, the future honourable and reverend, first put in an appearance at the Priory, Witham. Of course, it was not easy to keep the sisters uninformed of the forthcoming wedding, even had Mr. Clynton's curate seen any reason for such secrecy, which he did not. The curate was an old friend and college chum of Mr. Griffiths, and when this gentleman,—one of the class of unbefriended ministers to whom promotion never comes,—discovered the rank of the lady at whose marriage his friend was to officiate, it was not long before the ladies at the rectory were put in possession of the news. While the curate was telling his story, Mr. Kirke called to inquire after the rector, and of course it was not long before he, too, learned of the approaching ceremony. "He had," he observed, "a slight acquaintance with Mr. Griffiths, and he thought this news would be of interest to the Toynbees." Thus it happened that when Mr. Kirke went back to Wanstead he carried with him an earnest invitation from the two Miss Clyntons to their "dear friend Miss Allyn, that she would, if possible, come up to town early on Thursday next, when an old acquaintance (as we understand from Mr. Kirke) is to be married by licence at St. Ambrose's."

A little questioning of Mr. Kirke wrung from that gentleman the name of the forthcoming bridegroom. As it was vacation at Wanstead Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Toynbee had not yet returned from their annual fortnight at the seaside, so that Edith found it quite easy to accept this invitation. On Wednesday she sought her own room, and unlocking a little cabinet,—an heirloom from her father,—she took therefrom a faded, yellow-looking envelope. It was a letter written by Hugh Desmond two days before he left Torweston for Holmwood Hall. How often that letter had been read she herself could not have said. That she had valued it highly may be inferred from the fact that it had lain there so long among her most prized treasures, her mother's wedding-ring and opal earrings, lockets containing portions of her parent's hair and their miniatures, a morocco-covered copy of the Rev. Charles Allyn's "Materialism Refuted, etc.," and other cherished mementoes of the dead.

Edith opened the letter and her eyes fell at once on the well-remembered passage:

"I will, as you counsel, seek for and encourage the spirit of



resignation, seeking grace to resign myself in all things to the Divine will. I scarcely think that I stand in need of a warning against ambition; my highest earthly aspiration is now, and will continue to be, to make myself in all things more worthy of one whom in a few years I hope to be able to claim. I feel that in God's eyes we are already set apart as husband and wife, although the sacrament (as I consider it) is lacking. Wherever I go, your memory will be my incentive, and every day I pray that by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin we may, in God's good time, kneel together to be made one in heart and communion."

In that most affecting lament for his friend Jonathan, David said, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." It is very doubtful, however, whether or not the most emotional, sympathetic and imaginative among men can adequately gauge or estimate the profundity and nature of a true woman's love, or understand her affliction when that love has been outraged and despised. The rudely-snapped branches of the vine will, as gardeners know, "bleed" long after the maiming, and the pangs of a true and first love despised will continue at times to be felt until the scorned one has gone to that bourne *ubi sæva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit*.\* As she folded and replaced the letter Edith Allyn remembered that she had herself written that she could, if called upon to do so, uncomplainingly renounce. Well, the time for renunciation had come:—alas, its advent was so sudden! Only a short time had elapsed since he, the false one, had pressed her hand and called her angel, although, as she now recollected, he had made a mysterious broken allusion to some engagement with Mr. Kirke. Could it be, after all, that he had fallen into an error with regard to herself? What should she, what could she do, when on the morrow the man whom she loved better than herself, better than all else save her God, was to be married to another, was to be lost to herself for evermore? It seemed to her disturbed imagination that a huge opaque and portentous cloud had suddenly fallen and involved her in darkness, through which there gleamed a lurid glare enabling her to recognize but one idea,—that *he* was lost for ever. A peculiar feeling, a sort of dull agency, ap-

\* "Where fierce disdain is powerless further to lacerate the heart." The epitaph of the great Dean of St. Patrick's who tried in vain to scorn the world.

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peared to take possession of her heart, and she feared that she was about to swoon.

Hurriedly the letter was reconsigned to the cabinet, and then Edith Allyn happened to behold her own reflection in the toilet glass. She shrank from it in absolute horror, it looked so like Despair. At this moment a passage of Scripture came to her mind,—“Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” In a moment Edith was on her knees, and when again she stood upright and proceeded to remove all traces of her agitation, it was not until she had struggled in the dark, bitter waters of Renunciation, and battling strongly made her way to shore.

She was determined, however, to accept the invitation of the Clyntons. Let it cost her what it might of agony, she would, if possible, see the woman who had supplanted her; above all, she would look upon *him* for the last time. Having made this resolution, she went downstairs calmly and serenely, for there were one or two private pupils in music to be attended to. While waiting for one of these, Edith seemed to have nor care nor trouble,—she looked so utterly peaceful, so tranquilly happy. Nevertheless, her voice shook perceptibly while softly singing the martyr's hymn :

“ Lord, grant us so to Thee to turn,  
That we to die through life may learn,  
And thus, when life's brief day is o'er,  
Rejoice with Thee for evermore.”

The next morning, on their way to St. Ambrose's, the Clyntons told Edith all that they knew,—it is wonderful how rumour spreads and defies secrecy !—of the personality of the bride. She was the daughter, the only daughter, of the Earl of Guisborough. The bridegroom had been a music-master or instructor at Holmwood Hall. So much was known—quite enough it proved in the case of the Misses Clynton to serve as the foundation for a very respectable romance.

And now they were married, and the priest, joining their right hands, had said : “Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” It had been a sore ordeal for Edith, a time of unspeakable agony and woe. Yet she had endured it with the firmness of a martyr or a Stoic,—for, reader of mine, accept from me the assurance that Christianity

and philosophy can each, to the believing Christian and the true lover of wisdom, impart constancy and strength of mind in every affliction and trial. The rest of the service interested Edith but little,—saving the officiating minister, she was, perhaps, the most fervent in prayer, however, of all within the church. As the procession went down the aisle, Edith lifted the half-veil she had hitherto worn. Accidentally the eyes of the bride met hers for an instant, and Edith noted the glad radiance with which those magnificent orbs were fired, while she acknowledged within herself the literal truth of the opinion expressed by Eleanor, that the newly-married lady was grandly beautiful. She would not wait until the bridal party left the vestry, but thanking her friends for their kindness in thinking of her in connection with this noteworthy wedding, Edith bade them adieu at the church door, thus anticipating and, at least for the time, precluding the curiosity of the sisters to learn something of the character and condition of the bridegroom.

Hugh Desmond and his wife, with their friends, returned to their hotel in the Adelphi. There the post-nuptial festivities were modestly and cheerfully observed, Mr. Griffiths in the course of the evening humorously narrating his own escape from the hymeneal yoke. Under the favourable influence of the time and the occasion, William Curtin told some excellent, and of course most veracious, stories of Fion MacCumhal and other worthies of Milesian tradition, while his good wife, Mary, sang to Blanche Desmond's accompaniment many of the sweetest of Ireland's matchless melodies. Nellie Curtin sat as close as possible to Blanche during the day, for she had learned to love the lady very much, and now that Madeleine had returned from Brittany, Nellie would have to return to Gloucester Street and the mantles of St. Paul's Churchyard.

Four days afterward, our hero, his wife and his father, with the faithful Madeleine, and "convoyed," as the Captain said, by Cousin Maurice, left London for Carrig Desmond.

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## BOOKE YE SECOND.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE WOOING OF MR. KIRKE.

WANSTEAD Hall, though a modern foundation, was a much more ambitious and pretentious seminary than was John Drake's old grammar school at Culm Tor. As the majority of men would view it, Mr. Toynbee had doubtless done a wise thing in accepting the head-mastership of a school whose pupils, some two hundred in number, were nearly all scions of the secondary *bourgeoisie*, and in liberating himself from the burden of that engrossing and oppressive ledger, substituting for the wearisome £. s. d. of its triplicated columns a bank-account wherein the sum total of the deposits, however insignificant when compared with that of the Devonshire savings bank, was a much more gratifying and satisfactory subject of contemplation to Mr. Toynbee himself. Nevertheless, dear reader, I think upon close inquiry it would perchance be found that the good schoolmaster somewhat regretted the old life of peace, calm content, and happiness. There was,—or at least it seemed to him that there was,—a certain air of unreality and of affectation about the school as unsatisfactory to his perceptions as the smell of prunella, varnish, and new leather in the recently-made library of a parvenu. Among the Seniors, and to some extent among the Juniors also, there was a certain audacity or "loudness" that savoured too much of vulgar ostentation. Massive gold watch-chains abounded among the fellows, and the cricket eleven, the football team, and the school athletes all wore uniforms more tawdry than serviceable, uniforms which, in the various matches and competitions with the representatives of other schools, fared but too often like Sir John Suckling's troop of horse at the hands of the Covenanters. Ably seconded, however, by the assistant masters, one of whom had taken orders, Mr. Toynbee had already improved the general tone; and he

had every reason to believe that the advent of a number of boys from various old county families of Essex and Hertfordshire,—brought hither in a great measure by the influence of Mr. Kirke,—would tend gradually to eliminate the priggishness and showy pretentiousness of the gilded youth of the suburbs.

Mr. and Mrs. Toynbee returned to Wanstead Hall on Saturday, two days after the marriage of our hero. The fortnight spent at Broadstairs had considerably benefited them, Mr. Toynbee especially being as sunburnt as a fisherman. The two assistant-masters seemed also to have turned their vacation to the same excellent purpose, for as the party sat down to tea in Mrs. Toynbee's parlour their cheerfulness of voice and excellence of appetite corroborated the assurance of vigorous health presented by their bronzed faces and brilliant eyes.

"Miss Allyn," said one of the masters,—the clergyman, the Rev. John Skilton,—“may I venture to say that you are looking a little paler than when I saw you last? Have you had no vacation? surely you have not been shut up here all these weeks, have you?”

"Paler? do you think so, Mr. Skilton? Only by comparison with the faces you have encountered lately, perhaps," replied Edith. "I assure you I have had a most agreeable time. Before uncle and aunt went down to Broadstairs we almost explored Essex and Hertfordshire, besides what we accomplished in town. I hope that you and Mr. Sharpe have enjoyed yourselves."

Mr. Sharpe,—who was the mathematical instructor and "natural philosopher" of the school,—hesitated somewhat in his speech, although his articulation was good, so before he could testify regarding his experience Mr. Skilton returned a reply on his own part.

"Thank you, yes. I accepted a *locum tenency* at the seaside, Birchampton, where I have had a famous time, I assure you. The parish is in excellent order. There are few Dissenters; they have the eastward position and choral celebrations. I had no previous knowledge of the incumbent, who was mainly anxious to know if I could intone."

"Did you see him before concluding the engagement, Mr. Skilton?" inquired the principal.

"Oh yes! I went down in reply to his notice in the *Guar-*

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dian. You know Birchampton, Mr. Toynbee, of course, since you have been down that way so recently?"

"No, Mr. Skilton, I never heard the name before, I think. Had we known that you were there, of course we should have gone there for a day or two. So the rector wanted to know if you could intone, eh? Well, your voice surprised him, I expect."

Mr. Skilton blushed slightly, as he always did when complimented. He possessed a magnificent baritone voice, was a very High Churchman, but without influence or connection; he had hitherto only filled a poor curacy in Norfolk at a stipend of seventy pounds a year, which he was only too glad to resign for the second mastership at Wanstead Hall with its one hundred and twenty pounds per annum. He was a graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford, an excellent teacher, and a firm disciplinarian. Mr. Sharpe was a bachelor of arts of Cambridge, a quiet, reserved little man who seldom spoke of himself, and whose theological leanings it was hard to discover, although it was generally supposed he inclined toward the school of Broad Churchmen.

"I do not know about that," said Mr. Skilton, "but Mr. Hill was fairly satisfied, I suppose, for he at once offered me two and a half guineas a week and the use of the rectory. He himself has been in Bavaria; but I assure you that I have had a splendid time. The inshore fishing was excellent."

"And you, Mr. Sharpe," asked Edith, "I hope you have found your vacation no less pleasant?"

"Yes, thank you," replied the master, "Winfred and I have been down in Dorsetshire fishing, collecting shells and objects for the aquarium, besides visiting every part of the county on our bicycles."

Winfred was Mr. Sharpe's younger brother, and a student at Guy's Hospital, where he had recently earned a scholarship for general proficiency in medical study. Their father had been killed at Jhansi, during the Sepoy mutiny; their mother, with two daughters and young Winfred himself, lived in their own house at Peckham, Mrs. Sharpe being in receipt of a Government pension.

"Dorsetshire, eh?" said Mr. Toynbee,—rather indistinctly as he had just bitten into his buttered toast,—“the most delightful county in England. Edith's father was at Wareham before he came to Mordred Cross, and in '51 or '52 we

went together in a small yacht from Sidmouth to Poole. Mildred, why is it that the toast one gets away from home is always cold and humid?"

"Not always, I think, dear," remonstrated Mrs. Toynbee; "but I suppose it sometimes comes from overworked servants and perhaps irregularity on the part of the guests. You know, dear, that when you were at the seaside I could never quite feel assured that you would not be at least half-an-hour late to dinner."

"Humph!" said Mr. Toynbee, "we go to such places to escape from routine; but we are all the thralls of habit, go where we may. For example, your city merchant may be seen any day on the beach studying the stock and share lists; I myself always took the *Times* in my pocket, as though one wanted to read of politicians and their scheming in the shadow of the North Foreland. That reminds me, Edith, my dear, did you read that marriage notice in yesterday's *Times*? Of course you did, women discover such things intuitively."

Edith merely smiled at her uncle's sarcasm, but Mrs. Toynbee replied:

"Then I am afraid that my intuition must be very much at fault, since I am obliged to confess that it did not lead me to read the *Times* at all yesterday. Indeed, Mr. Toynbee, I think the paper must have been in your pocket all the day. But to what notice do you allude? Has any one I know been married this week?"

"I should think so, indeed," said Mr. Toynbee, "no other than our friend Mr. Desmond of Torweston."

"Mr. Desmond married! You surprise me, George."

"I can scarcely see why, my dear," observed Mr. Toynbee. "Mr. Skilton, may I trouble you to pass the cream?—surely since Adam's time it has been natural enough among men to marry."

"Yes, yes, I know," answered Mrs. Toynbee, upon whose good nature her better-half's mild sarcasm seldom had any perceptible effect; "but then Mr. Desmond never seemed to be a marrying man, and since we knew him he has become a Romanist, and I concluded that in time he would become a priest."

"In which event he certainly would be a *marrying* man," said the incorrigible schoolmaster. "However, here it is,"—

and, rising from the table, Mr. Toynbee possessed himself of

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a newspaper. "Listen: 'DESMOND—MEADOWS.—At St. Ambrose's, yesterday, by the Rev. R. L. Griffiths, M.A., assisted by the Rev. A. Hulbert, M.A., Hugh Desmond, Esq., of Carrig Desmond, Co. Carlow, Ireland, to Lady Blanche Meadows, of Holmwood, Rutland.' Well, Milly, what do you say to that, eh?"

For a moment Mrs. Toynbee said nothing, being evidently too much surprised to speak. Her attention was at this point diverted towards replenishing the cups of the assistant masters, which afforded Mr. Toynbee an opportunity of addressing his niece.

"Edith," he said, "you used to take some interest in Mr. Desmond. Have you not heard anything from the Clyntons about it?"

"About what, uncle? Mr. Desmond's marriage?" she inquired. "Oh yes, I was present during the ceremony. I had been invited by Avis and Eleanor."

Mr. Toynbee indulged in a low whistle. "After that," he said, "who will contend that a woman cannot keep a secret? But come, dear, we are all attention, and your aunt at least is bursting with curiosity."

The assistants laughed, and even Edith herself was fain to smile at this imputation, it being clearly apparent that Mr. Toynbee was most anxious to hear Edith's statement. She had, of course, anticipated this demand, and her account of the marriage was given without a tremor.

"But who is this Lady Blanche Meadows?" inquired Mrs. Toynbee, "and what has our Mr. Desmond, of Devonshire, to do with Ireland?"

"Lady Blanche Meadows is an earl's daughter, that is all," returned her husband. "The other question I cannot answer. However, Mr. Kirke promised to call after tea, so perhaps we may learn something more of the mystery from him."

Mr. Skilton and Mr. Sharpe remained in the parlour just long enough to greet Mr. Kirke, after which they betook themselves to their respective apartments to arrange the various treasures and spoils acquired during their recent respite from the study hall. Mr. Toynbee was not long in discovering that Mr. Kirke possessed but a little more knowledge of the "mystery" connected with Hugh's marriage than he himself already knew.

"I have no doubt," said Mr. Kirke, "that the circum-

stances precedent to this extraordinary wedding were, as Miss Eleanor Clynton says, of a decidedly romantic character. Indeed, the 'society papers,' as they call them, have already hinted as much. I have read vague paragraphs in which Mr. Desmond has been stigmatized as an adventurer, accused of beating a gentleman almost to death in Ireland for singing the national anthem, and so on, all proving, I think, the ignorance of their writers. This, however, is from *Veritas*, and it bears in some degree the impress of truth," and the reverend gentleman gave Mrs. Toynbee a cutting from the veracious organ of small-talk he had named. Having raised the lamp which stood on the centre-table, Mrs. Toynbee read the following :

"ROMANCE IN HIGH LIFE.

"We understand that no pains were spared by the peer whose daughter has just been married under the most romantic circumstances to bring his disobedient and refractory offspring into a more dutiful frame of mind. The young lady was subjected both to paternal and fraternal pressure to induce her to repudiate the man of her choice, but all to no purpose. Subsequent to her flight from the ancestral hall an arrangement was made by his lordship's chaplain for a conference, which was held in his lordship's house in Belgravia. The noble parent, the spiritual head of his Church in this country, and other exalted persons, all did their utmost to impress the lovers with a sense of their folly, a special effort being made to overawe and dazzle the mind of the young gentleman. Of course, as our readers know, the conference was a failure, but it might have ended more gracefully had the noble Earl remained master of himself throughout. The hero of this strange affair proved fully equal to the occasion."

"There," said Mr. Kirke, "I have no doubt that all that is substantially correct."

"It may be so," returned Mr. Toynbee, "but allow me to observe that it is tantalizingly laconic. But how do you know that it is correct?"

"Well, I saw Mr. Desmond assisting,—I may say almost carrying,—the lady into the hotel. He told me she had fainted shortly before."

"Did you see her plainly, Mr. Kirke?" inquired Mrs. Toynbee. "Do you think her good-looking?"

"I did not see her face very distinctly, but I should say she is,—ah, Miss Allyn, you have seen this lady?"

"She is grandly, superbly beautiful, auntie," replied Edith ; "she is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. And oh, she looked so very happy !" and the speaker turned away from the table, not so quickly, however, but that her aunt discovered the swelling moisture in her eyes.

Mr. Kirke's visit was a very brief one. Before leaving he pressed his friends to take tea at the rectory the following evening. Edith was about to ask to be excused, when she saw the clergyman looking wistfully toward her, and she relented.

"Miss Allyn," he said, "Mrs. Wiltshire will be there and her son Charles, whose stories of adventure will, I am sure, interest Mr. Toynbee very much. It is really astonishing to find so young a man, comparatively speaking, with so extended an experience."

Having thus skilfully limed the twig for Mr. Toynbee, who, like all sedentary men, delighted in stories of travel and adventure, the clergyman turned to plead with Mrs. Toynbee.

"Will you not take pity on a lonely bachelor ?" he said. "I assure you the rectory is as dull and silent as a hermitage, and I am becoming hypochondriacal."

"I do not wonder at that, Mr. Kirke," observed the schoolmaster ; "you know who has said that it is not good for man to be alone. If there is one thing more than another which I, as a faithful, loving son of the Church of England, dislike to see, it is that any of our clergy should even innocently appear to countenance that unnatural feature of Roman discipline which precludes their clergy from matrimony. I hope," continued he, in his emphatic manner, passing his right hand across the top of his rather bald head, "I hope that by this time twelve months the rectory will have a mistress. How can any clergyman do his duty in a parish without a wife to act as a deaconess among the poor ? However, Mr. Kirke, we accept your kind invitation,"—Mr. Toynbee spoke for the ladies without consulting them, but men will sometimes act thus ; "I am glad to see that that young scapegrace Wiltshire is not ashamed to be known as a churchman."

Bachelors' parties are not often brilliant successes as entertainments. On the following evening, however, Mr. Kirke, his curate, and Charles Wiltshire exerted themselves to please, Wiltshire taking especial delight when any of his American reminiscences, jarring the schoolmaster's susceptibilities, awoke

a series of withering sarcasms in which the democratic principle was held responsible for ignorance, lawlessness, irreligion, chicanery and corruption. Mrs. Toynbee and old Mrs. Wiltshire were comparing notes economical, the latter lady having had a long and thorough experience in housekeeping at the Priory.

"Mr. Wiltshire," said Mr. Toynbee, after the young man had told a story of an elderly spinster in Ohio who had applied to her lawyer with the view to *collect damages* for certain alleged heart injuries resulting from the defection of her affianced,—“Mr. Wiltshire, why did that woman say *collect* for *obtain* or *procure*? Do you know, sir, that many of those Americanisms seem to send a shiver or cold spasms up one's back?”

"Quite so, Mr. Toynbee, quite so; I fully understand that. When I went to America I used to regard all such-expressions and irregularities as personal outrages, or as proceeding directly from a perverse but fixed intention to degrade the English language.\* But one gradually becomes less sensitive. With your permission, I will tell you a little story of a Western editor who took umbrage because our manager would not, after paying for our advertisements, give a free pass to the whole newspaper establishment."

At this juncture Mr. Kirke arose and crossing the room addressed Edith.

"Miss Allyn," he said, "I am sure you find all this insufferably dreary. If you will come into the library I will ask your opinion of some old prints I bought the other day in Piccadilly."

"Thank you," she said, "I am sure I shall like them, as your judgment is so good. Yes, Mr. Wiltshire's anecdotes soon pall upon one, I think. It seems to me that, instead of humour, his stories chiefly contain absurd and sometimes grotesque exaggerations."

"He would assure you that exaggeration is their humour," returned Mr. Kirke, as they entered the next room, where the rector kept his books and a fine collection of prints and water colours. The prints recently purchased were in a portfolio, and for some time Edith examined them almost in silence.

\* Mr. Ruskin is reported to entertain a somewhat similar opinion, which he thus expresses: "Whenever you hear an American expression there comes upon you a sense of sudden cold. It is the essential function of America to make us all feel that."

Suddenly, however, raising her eyes she encountered those of Mr. Kirke fixed upon her with almost an anxious expression. The moment was propitious and the rector, trying though the ordeal was to him, had resolved to avail himself of the opportunity.

"Miss Allyn, you perhaps remember what your uncle said to me last night?" he began.

"Last night?" she asked; "no, Mr. Kirke, I am afraid I do not quite."

"About my life here alone; about my—my—about the rectory having a mistress."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Kirke, I remember now, but you must not always take uncle so seriously."

"I know, Miss Allyn; but I have long been of the same opinion, and Miss Allyn, Edith,—may I call you so?—I have long looked forward to this interview. I love you very sincerely, very dearly, and I hope, dear Miss Allyn, dear Edith, you will accept me as your husband. May I hope it will be to, dear one?" and the little man, whose paleness and trepidation indicated how strongly he was moved, ventured to take Edith's hand in his own. She did not withdraw it, but looking with a calm smile of pitying sympathy into his eyes, she said:

"Mr. Kirke, I am so sorry; I have never thought of the possibility of this. All who know you like you, we all esteem you very highly, and that any disappointment or grief should befall you would pain me very much. You will not, therefore, be displeased, you will not be hurt or wounded,—we all have some self-esteem which when hurt sometimes rankles sorely,—when I answer that I can never be your wife. As a clergyman you will know what I mean when I say I have devoted my life to God, that I am trying to become the handmaid of the Lord. I thank you for your kind thoughts of me, but I shall never marry. Will you try to be content with this decision?"

The rector bowed his head toward the little hand which he pressed to his lips.

"God's will be done!" he said, almost in a whisper, "he doeth all things well."

On their return to the drawing-room they found Mr. Toynbee vigorously defending Freemasonry against some imaginary assailant whom young Wiltshire had dexterously con-

trived to stand responsible for certain grave accusations against the fraternity. On such a theme, the schoolmaster always waxed profoundly eloquent, so neither he nor the other gentlemen even thought of observing the traces of emotion in his countenance when Mr. Kirke rejoined them. With Mrs. Toynbee, however, the case was very different. On the preceding evening she had seen her niece's eyes fill with tears when she spoke of the happy looks of Blanche Desmond, and it may be that this slight occurrence had sharpened her vigilance. That night, after Edith had retired, her aunt entered the room and knelt beside the bed to kiss the peaceful, lovely face beside her.

"Dearest," she said, "is there anything you wish to tell me? Mr. Kirke was agitated this evening, and so, I think, were you. Do you wish to tell me anything, Edith dear?"

"It must be our secret, auntie," she replied, "Mr. Kirke's, mine, yours and God's. If you like, you may tell uncle so that he may be on his guard when talking with the rector. Yes, auntie, he asked me to be his wife."

"And you, my dear? what was your answer?" said Mrs. Toynbee.

"I told him, auntie, that I should never marry, that I have devoted myself unto God."

"Yes, dear," said the aunt, "yes, dear. Good-night, my love! Are you sure, Edith,—that is, do you think you are sure, that you have given your heart wholly to God?"

"Yes, auntie, I think so; I will try to resign myself in all things to his will."

"Good night, dear!" said Mrs. Toynbee,—and as she kissed her niece's brow two tears fell from her eyes,—“Good night and God bless you! Remember, darling, that ‘If we suffer we shall also reign with him.’”

Such, reader, is the faithful Christian's consolation in bereavement or affliction. It is, perhaps, better than the induration of Stoicism; but let religion and philosophy say what they will, it is, methinks, always painful to stifle pain.

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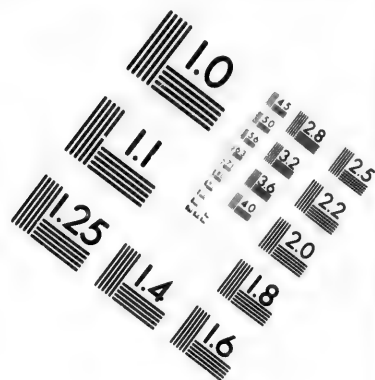
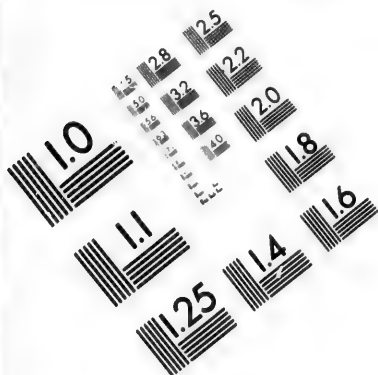
## CHAPTER XXXI.

IN WHICH MR. SHINE PREFERS TO RIDE.

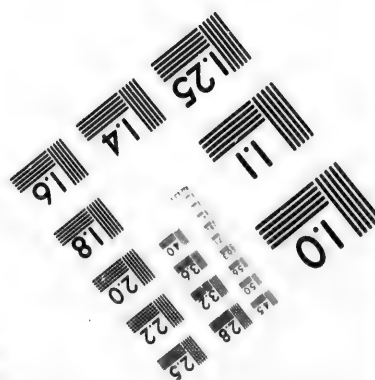
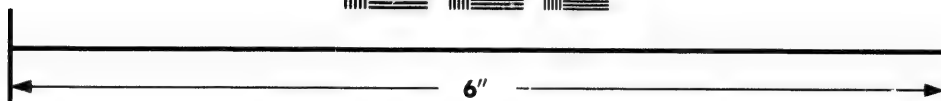
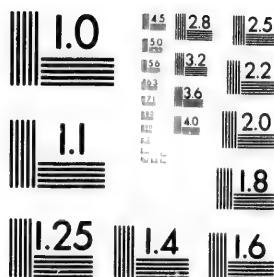
FATHER Lawrence O'Ruarc, soon after our hero and his bride took up their residence at Carrig Desmond, retired to the presbytery at Inniscarra. Ere long it was industriously rumoured throughout the neighbourhood that the young couple were Atheists, and it was hinted at the same time that the Squire had fallen or was about to fall from the faith. Among the country gentry, however, Lady Blanche Desmond was a general favourite; and if so much could not be said for her husband, it was certainly true that he was widely respected, except among the peasantry, who, —thanks to assiduously-fostered prejudice and well-fanned bigotry, —always among themselves alluded to "the young squire" as a renegade from the faith and an opponent to the national aspiration for liberty.

The most careful inquiry at the telegraph office with respect to the forged telegram resulted in no discovery of importance. Though our hero remembered reading the words "Inni-carra, Co. Carlow," on the paper held before him by the priest, he had forgotten that there was no telegraph office nearer to the castle than Coolreagh, the railway station six miles west of Carrig Desmond. There was absolutely nothing to connect Father O'Ruarc with the forgery, so that the cousins ultimately accepted the opinion put forward by Lady Blanche, —namely, that either Major Meadows or Father Nevins, or perhaps the two in concert, had sent an emissary across the Irish Sea with certain instructions, which had, of course, been strictly followed.

During the winter there had been no evictions on the Earl of Sherborne's estates, because that nobleman's reply to the agent's statement of the demands put forward by the tenantry had taken the form of a personal visit, during which his lordship saw enough to convince him that three bad years in succession had strained the resources of the small farmers very much indeed. Having ascertained this to his own satisfaction, the Earl had called the tenantry together and announced that he had resolved to take only a half-year's rent from them. In this manner, he hoped, they would all see how heartily he sympathized with them, "for how," added he with a twinkle



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of humour in his kindly eye, "how can one man better manifest sympathy with another than by voluntarily assuming a moiety of his trouble to himself?" Thus it happened that for some months Mr. Patrick Shine was compelled to concentrate his energies on the development of his own particular business as a grocer and general dealer rather more than was his wont. Early in the new year, however, the Agitator had been absent from Inniscarra rather more than a month, and on his return he exhibited certain credentials by virtue of which he at once stepped into the position of a recognized leader among the Nationalists of the district. It seemed, moreover, that the elements themselves had conspired to strengthen his influence, for the spring and early summer had been unusually rainy, and on all sides the small cultivators were sorely disheartened and hopeless. Instead of being "tided over," the troublous time had been extended and its stringency increased, so that it was now,—early in July though it was, however,—reasonably certain that but few of the tenant farmers would be able to meet their obligations to their landlords from the ingathering of that year. Day after day the rain fell in torrents, until the roads were converted into quagmires, and the wheat in the fields began to bend ominously before the pitiless downpour. The first dry day of the month,—that had not, however, run into its second week as yet,—happened to be the particular Friday whereon Tim Darragh, factotum at the Presbytery, had undertaken to drive the jaunting car to Coolreagh, there to meet and receive his employer and pastor the Rev. Father Tom Cahill. Having left the village a few hundred yards in his rear, Tim drew out his *dudheen*, or short pipe,—the inevitable clay, with stem free from flexure and bowl absurdly thick and uncouth,—filled it with a weed more pungent than fragrant in promised-potency, and began to smoke in comfort. On no consideration would he, dearly as he loved tobacco, have smoked while driving through Inniscarra, inasmuch as the Protestant clergyman's man, who was a mirror of neatness in his turnout, had once spoken in Tim's hearing that no self-respecting groom or coachman would copy the manners of a Dublin jarvey.

With his hat thrown to the back of his head and thoroughly enjoying his smoke, Tim Darragh seemed resolved to make his duty as pleasant to himself as possible. He was a fine specimen of the Leinster peasant; although not quite twenty years

old, he was nearly six feet in height, broad of shoulder and narrow of waist, while his countenance always bore the impress of good nature, his rather wide mouth with its lips partly open suffering the gleaming teeth within to become visible. The train by which Father Tom was to travel from Kildare was due at Coolreagh a little before three o'clock, so that Tim doubtless felt himself justified, now that he had left the village, in allowing the mare to jog along almost at her own will and pleasure.

"Bedad," he said to himself as Molly Bawn, acquiescing in the mood of her driver, slackened her pace to a walk, "that is for all the world like the crathur's sex, as I understand women and horses. If you let go your houl't of the reins just for an instant maybe, why thin, the dear knows, they thinks at wance that the road's their own, ayther to loiter and fiddle away the time or, taking the bit between their teeth, to start off on a steeplechase with the devil. I wonder is Katie Conroy that kind of a girl? faith, sometimes she seems mighty set on that Johnston, bad scan to him for an Orangeman! And sure Katie herself is a Pradestint, more's the pity, *ma vourneen mo sheacht n-anam astigh thu!*"\*

Tim continued to smoke and to ruminate until the cross-roads came into view, his own way to Coolreagh being on the left, while that to Carrig Desmond turned off to the right. As it was by no means unlikely that he might encounter some one from the castle at or near the junction of the roads, Tim gently intimated to Molly that he was no longer in a brown study, and the sagacious animal forthwith broke into a gentle canter, her driver at the same moment breaking out into song.

"Och, the dear little fellow!  
His legs they were yellow,  
He flew like a marten and swam like a hake;  
But some dirty savage,  
To grease his white cabbage,  
Has murdhred Nell Flaherty's beautiful drake."

"Arrah!" soliloquized Tim, "it must have been a mortal sin on the part of that same savage. Besides the killing of the drake, which was murdher, there was also the takin' of it from the widow Flaherty, which was thievin'. Sure, it was

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\* "My darling, seven times dearer than the soul with'n me."

a sin to be confessed, but maybe the poor devil was hungry and too proud to beg. Maybe, in some such a case myself would ha' done no better, the saints between us and sin ! Wish, though, a wise man ought to be able to fill his belly widout endangering his soul. Sure, in such a ticklish case of conscience, myself would have killed and eaten the drake wid a protest, as I heard Father Tom say wance to the district inspector, or wid a reservation to the effect that I would make a point of consulting my spiritual director on the subject before next Easter anyway. Sure, there is nobody at the cross-roads ; hi ! Molly, get up !

“ ‘ Ould King Cole was a merry ould soul,  
And a merry ould soul was he ;  
He called for his pipe and called for his glass,  
And called for his fiddlers three.’ ”

Bodad ! there is somebody there ; aye, and it's Paddy Shine or the devil. Faith, I have about as much liking for the one as the other.”

It was, perhaps, because his affections were thus evenly balanced that Tim touched the mare's right flank with the whip, while he himself, turning his eyes toward the left, once more, and with increased energy, began to sing :

“ I lookéd here, I lookéd there,  
I lookéd over yander ;  
And there I saw the ould gray goose  
A-winkin' at the gander.  
Roll up my ould coat, turn up my sleeve,—  
Jordan is a hard road to travel, I believe.”

Very much to Darragh's disgust, however, Molly, having turned the corner at the milepost, suddenly stopped as if in terror, whereupon Tim almost instinctively shortened the reins, a movement which in all probability prevented the startled mare from running away. Mr. Pat Shine, having seen the car some time before he himself had been recognized by its driver, had made up his mind to avail himself of it as a means of locomotion so long as his own way was concurrent with the high road. The Agitator was too crafty to be deceived or outmanœuvred by Tim's simple ruse, which he had defeated by stepping quickly into the middle of the road and extending



his arms, being at the same time on the alert to step aside should the device prove unsuccessful.

"Arrah: Mr. Shine," growled Tim, as he almost drew the mare on to her haunches, "what the divil possessed ye to act so like an omadhaun or a madman? See here now,—whoa, Molly, whoa!—'tis all I can do to hould the crachur' in, sure ye almost scar't the life out from her whin ye darted out like the haythin Callachan sweeping down from the Rock o' Cashel."

"Why, Tim, *ma bouchal*," replied Shine, "what else could I do? Sure I wanted a lift on the car for a mile or two maybe beyant, but how the divil were you to know that, trotting along as ye were like King O'Toole's pig, wid your beautiful great big mouth wide open?"

"Faith, Mr. Shine, sure ye'll allow that wan could not expect to meet yourself here."

"Maybe so, Tim Darragh," returned Shine, "but whatever ye expected, sure, my hearty, you knew that I was there by the side of the road all the same."

"Faith, an' if I did, Mr. Shine, divil—"

"Avast there, *ma bouchaleen*," said the other, "sure it raises the divil in a man when a green gomeril such as you are tries to pull the wool over his eyes, as they say in Ameriky. Tim, my son, I was born in Waterford, too near the salt water to be deludhered by so fresh a gorsoon as yourself."

"Ye may have been born in hell for what I care, Paddy Shine," said Darragh, his face flushing, "but if ye dare to say that I am a liar, by the powers, but I'll bate ye until—"

"Until I am ready to dance Peter O'Pea on one toe, Tim, I guess," said Shine, laughing; "arra, man, let me git on board the car, an' quit your foolin'. I have fought as good men as yourself in my time, Darragh, on sea and on shore, with fist and shillelagh, and divil a wan has shown better play than meself. I have another sort of fighting to do now, *ma lanuv*, and besides, Tim, I am old enough to be your father."

"On wid ye, Mr. Shine!" cried the easily placated Tim, "sure I was only mad wid the mare, I think. Get on, Molly! And how far are ye going on this road, Mr. Shine?"

"There's to be a meeting at Heffernan's this afternoon," returned the other, "and we will be after trying to put matters into shape for the hard times that are threatening the country. If there is to be any further tightening, why then,

bedad, we will take care that the landlords get their share of it too."

"At Heffernan's!" said Darragh, in some surprise; "why, man, it's yerself that's on the wrong road entirely. You will go three miles out of your way by taking the Coolreagh road, whereas if ye go the usual way by Carrig Desmond 'twill be more pleasant and you will save at least an hour, for from the Holy Well it is all up-hill to Heffernan's."

"I know all that, Tim, but I would rather not go by the ould castle. Not that I should care very much even if the ould Squire attended our meeting; but faix, wid him they call the Young Master 'twould be different. He is no friend of the people, Tim, and be sure that the people will not forget it ayther."

"You are a great politician, Mr. Shine," answered Tim, "and it may be as you say. But maybe those of the other side have good arguments of their own, and by the same token, I would have ye undherstand that Father Tom and Father Larry don't agree in their politics at all, at all."

"Indade, Tim?" asked Shine, with some show of curiosity, "are ye quite convinced of that same?"

"Bedad, an' it's often I've heard them discoorsin' of it," said Tim, "an' well I know what Father Tom, long life to him anyway! has to say about it."

"Aye, aye," said the Agitator artfully, "but you are not scholar enough, Tim, to spake it, is that it?"

"Savin' your presence, I did not say so, Mr. Shine. Faith, because a man does not keep a grocery or a shebeen, he need not be considered altogether an eejeot. Many's the time have I heard Father Tom say that Repeal was, or had been, a plain, straightforward issue, but that Home Rule ayther means more than it says, in which case it is an imposture, or is a totally inadequate proposal. Them's his own words, Mr. Shine, as I've heerd them spoken to Father Larry again and again."

"And what has Father Larry to say by way of answer, Tim?" inquired Shine with interest.

"Arragh! not much, man, at all, at all. Sure, all the world knows that no one, barrin' maybe the Pope, can equal Father Tom in conthrovarsy. Father O'Ruarc only muttered something about a wedge and its thin end, but what the devil has that to do wid the question anyhow?"

"Father Tom is a great friend of this young Desmond, they

say," said Shine. "They are often colloquing at the castle, I hear, but the Young Master never goes ayther to chapel or church. Between ourselves, Tim Darragh,—since you love Father Tom so well,—his riverence might do better than associate wid a man who has sold his soul to the devil."

"Sold his soul to the devil! Who do you mane, Pat Shine? Surely not the Young Master at the castle?"

"Begorra! no one else, Tim. Why, man, not a month goes by widout his having some infidel article or pome in one or other of the Sassenagh magazines or newspapers. Sure, all Ireland knows he is the most out-and-out infidel there is, and that it would be a mortal sin to walk on the same side of the way wid him."

"Tare an' agers!" cried Tim in dismay, "can that be possible? Holy Mary pity him and enlighten his ignorance! 'Deed an' it's a sad thing, Mr. Shine. I was thinking, maybe he was a bit of a Pradestint, but sure I never thought he was an infidel."

"Worse nor an infidel, I tell ye, Tim Darragh; sure he is an Atheist, which is Turk, haythin, Pradestint, Orangeman, and infidel all in one. He is an enemy to the Church, and well Father Tom knows it, and faix, I would tell his riverence so to his face."

"That may be, Mr. Shine," said Tim; "I'll not give ye the lie by saying ye would not; but, begorra, I'll not have ye saying that Father Tom colloques wid the Young Master other than in pure friendship."

"I don't deny that," said the other, "sure his riverence cannot help it, and maybe it is tryin' to make a Christian of him he is; but he will fail, Tim, he will fail, for all the Desmonds have always been stubborn as rocks, and the dear knows, Father Tom himself may be injured by associating wid him. It is nearly always the case wid thim that hould converse wid such. I knew one or two of that sort in Ameriky."

"And you were hurt by associating wid them while there, were ye?" asked Darragh, sarcastically.

"Maybe yes, to some triffin' extent," said the Agitator, "but I have had absolution long ago for that, more by token that Ameriky is the land of liberty, where of coorse you are likely to meet many a wan who differs from us here in the ould country."

"Yes, to be sure," observed Tim, with a peculiar smile,

"Amerlky is the land of liberty. My cousin Mary Keffe went to Boston three year ago, and well she knows that it is a land of liberty."

"Mary Keffe?" inquired Shine, "is she a daughter of Ned Keffe who houlds under the Squire?"

"To be sure she is," answered Tim, "and she was, had she only known it, well enough off at home. But she had heard so much of America that she,—bein' a bit of a dressmaker,—went off one fine morning soon after getting a fine letter from some friends of the ould people who were livin' in that same Boston."

"But she has done well in the new country, I guess," said Shine.

"Wisha, then, to tell you the truth, Mr. Shine, not so well as she thought to do at all, at all. She lived wid the friends for a week or two, when they gently hinted that Mary had better look out for something to do. She travelled all over the city looking for work, but divil an Irish dressmaker was wanted that saison in Boston. At last when her money was all gone, her friends found her a place in servise, and, the dear knows, poor Mary soon began to wish herself back in ould Ireland, wid nothing harder to do than to milk the cows, make the butter, and maybe wash the p'taties for her mother."

"And sure bein' in servise is honest work anyway," observed the Agitator, "and shiver me timbers! but I think I would like it better than I would stitching away day after day like little Dan Hagarty, the lame tailor in Inniscarra. Bedad, there is a goose or a turkey to be found once in a while in a good kitchen, but divil a goose has Hagarty or the likes of him except one that 'twould crack his ould jaws to bite at."

"But servise at home, where there are cooks, housemaids, and a boy or two to run arrands, is quite a different thing from what poor Mary found it in Boston. There, begorra, she was maid of all work,—though the master was a banker,—and the mistress, having been brought up in a house where they had no servants of any kind, was as hard as a Tartar now that she had power, and poor Mary was kept at it all day long, worse nor a nagur. She kept in her place, however, until her master ran away to Canady wid all the money of the bank and another man's wife. Since then she has worked in several houses, but her pride will not allow her to

come back to the ould sod before she has saved a little money. Mary is a sharp little colleen, and the brightest that ever came out o' the Brothers' school in Inniscarra. Father Tom himself has read most of her letters, and he laughs fit to burst when she takes off the upstarts. Take my word for it, Mr. Shine, however well you may know Ameriky, I would rather serve a dacent, honest Christian gentleman at home, one of the old stock, than go to your land of liberty to toil like a slave wid pick and shovel or to run around like a dog at the whistle of a putty-faced counter-jumper or some mongrel *shoneen* no higher than myself, or better ayther except for his money. No, no; ould Ireland is good enough for me, and I notice that the folk who are always advising a poor boy to emigrate to the land of liberty and happiness seldom swallow any of their own physic. But here we are at the Holy Well. You have better than three miles to go up that rocky *boreen*\*, and all because you do not like the young Squire, avic."

For a moment or two Tim Darragh watched the Agitator as he wended his way, with his peculiar rolling, sailor-like gait, up the hill. As he once more urged his mare onward, Tim shook his head ominously.

"Pat Shine and Dennis Heffernan working together, indade! Well, it's myself that would not care to be a third wid them, for they do say that Dennis is an ould moonlighter and that innocent blood lies at his door. There will come little that is good out of the colloquing of two such rapparees, I'm thinking."

So far as the landowners of the district were concerned, little good, indeed, resulted from the active coalition thus deprecated by Tim Darragh. Soon after the meeting at Heffernan's, various demands were made upon the landlords and their agents, demands which appeared all the more exorbitant and unreasonable because hitherto the tenantry had always shown moderation and freedom from class envy and malevolence. The history of Ireland is fraught with illustrations of the evil harvest certain to be reaped when sleeping, careless guardians and heartless lawgivers allow the enemy to come and sow tares among the wheat. Instead of Feudalism, conscious of its duties,—as when a Warwick fed thirty thousand men at his tables in merrie England,—we now have Feudo-

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\*Anglice, a lane or country road.

Commercialism, which enables the Howards, Cecils, Grosvenors, *et id genus omne*,—surely *nothi pulli, ex peregrinis maribus concepti*\*,—to pile one upon another the guineas drawn from their rack-rented tenants and impoverished leaseholders. *Noblesse oblige*, forsooth! Who will guarantee to the bastard system twenty years more of life?

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### SHOWING SOME MODERN METHODS OF PROMOTING FREEDOM.

**D**URING the following winter,—1873-4,—there had been a number of outrages,—nearly all of a petty character, however,—perpetrated around Inniscarra. Many of the hounds had been poisoned, so that little or no hunting had taken place, the master of the Innishogue foxhounds wisely determining not to risk the almost certain loss of the pack by calling a meet. By means well-known to those acquainted with the methods of Irish conspiracy a powerful agrarian secret society had been formed. This society was all the more formidable because it was guided and directed rather as an instrument of vengeance by ignorant, brutal, and revengeful men, instead of being subject to the restraint of some central authority such as has since developed into an *imperium in imperio*, and which has even been negotiated with as a qualified high contracting power by statesmen and politicians, anathematized by the supercilious Ins, and wooed and vindicated by the embittered, yearning, and envious Outs. At Garrig Desmond the apparent inability of the tenants to pay their rents had been accepted and acquiesced in as inevitable. The Squire had, early in the winter, called his tenantry together, not so much with the view of ascertaining their financial ability,—for he was well assured that Shine and Heffernan had worked so thoroughly that no one, even if able, would dare to pay,—as to hear any complaints they might wish to make. On this occasion he went so far as to propose a re-valuation of every holding on the estate, an offer which one and all thankfully declined, which they well might do con-

\* "Bastard chicken, from foreign males conceived" (Columella). In the case of our modern Sybaritic aristocrats not at all unlikely, if the morals of their mothers have been correctly described and reported.



sidering that the Land Commissioners subsequently only heard one claim or appeal from the whole of this estate, an appeal which they did not allow.

Other landlords, however, were not so liberal,—partly, no doubt, because the greater part of them had always lived up to the full measure of their incomes. On some estates evictions had been held *in terrorem* over the heads of the recalcitrants, while the Hon. Ulick Burke and Mr. Cator had already forcibly dispossessed three or four of their respective tenants, all of whom, however, were obnoxious because of their general character as agitators and discontented ne'er-do-weels. Thus it will be seen that the new year was hardly welcomed, at least in that portion of Leinster and among the gentry, as being fraught with the promise of a better era, however exalted may have been the anticipations of those among the inferiors whose avarice the stormy petrels of Revolution, the agitators, had awakened.

If our hero were not quite so prolific a writer as Mr. Patrick Shine declared him to be, he was, nevertheless, a frequent contributor to the magazines and reviews. In addition to this he had published a monograph on the greatest Englishman who ever devoted himself to the pacification and civilization of Ireland,—Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford,—and the little volume was commended by many critics and disparaged by others, according to the politics of the different papers and reviews upon which the said critics were employed. Already, however, it had run through one edition, and so persistent were the scribblers of the so-called Nationalist papers in their abuse and vilification both of the book and its author, that it seemed as if a second edition would be disposed of even more quickly than the first. For some time our hero was utterly at a loss to understand why his advocacy of a policy of calm justice, coupled with a firm and consistent administration of the law, and a due regard for the rights of those whose possessions had been acquired under the operation and sanction of sodetarian conditions under and into which they had been bom, should have aroused against him such bitter malevolence and hostility. At that period,—comparatively recent though it be,—the general mind was not familiar with theories of class spoliation, transplanted from the Continent, although there had already appeared both in Ireland and America certain wholesale reformers whose nostrums partook of the

character of fleecing those that have and of bringing all things into a sort of chaotic equilibrium, preparatory to the sedimentary process which must necessarily, in due time, end in another condition of overbalance and inequality. He had yet to learn that a firm administration of the law was incompatible with the programme of those who hoped by means of successful law-breaking to render insurrection chronic, so that they themselves,—having previously, scum-like, floated to the surface,—might ultimately be summoned to act as doctors of the body politic, the Jack-Amend-Alls whose drugs could at least be warranted to kill or cure.

Between Lady Blanche Desmond and Miss Eva Burke a warm friendship had been formed, while Eva's father, the Hon. Ulick Burke of Knockmore Castle, was a warm friend of Squire Maurice and his consin. The two last-named gentlemen had done their utmost to stay Mr. Burke's hand in the matter of the evictions alluded to, but ineffectually, as the hot-headed old gentleman had proof positive that the men to whom he objected were fomentors of discord, insensible to kindness, and construers of leniency and consideration into evidences of timidity and pusillanimity.

"By God, sir?" he said to Hugh, a few days before putting the law into motion, "I know the spalpeens better than you do. I have carried my forbearance toward them already far beyond the bounds of prudence, and even though, like some of my forefathers, I should be driven to confront a hundred of the kerns with my single hand, yet, old greybeard as I am, I will not flinch. No, Mr. Desmond, my mind is made up: I will tolerate their insolence no longer."

After this there was nothing more to be said by way of remonstrance or expostulation, and the offending tenants were duly evicted, among them being Dennis Heffernan, who owed four years' rent—one hundred and sixteen pounds. No resistance was offered to the sub-sheriff and his bailiffs, although in the case of the old moonlighter opposition of some sort had been anticipated, and the officer of the law was considerably surprised when the door of the cabin yielded to his touch almost as though he had been an invited guest or a welcome neighbour. He started back for a moment, apprehending some treachery, but his courage returned when the voice of Dennis was heard inquiring who was at the door.

The sub-sheriff, followed by his bailiffs and one or two

policemen, entered the cabin. Heffernan and his two sons,—both evil-looking fellows of between twenty-five and thirty,—were seated beside a turf-fire, smoking the inevitable clay pipe or dudheen. The cool, calm demeanour of the three men, each sullen and morose by nature, while the senior was notorious for the part he had taken in agrarian outrages forty years ago, so influenced the official that he seemed almost to lose sight of the business that had brought him hither.

"God save all here!" he said, for he was a Roman Catholic and, as far as he could be so consistently with the proper performance of his official duty, a very good Christian.

"Faith, Mr. Moran," replied old Dennis, slowly rising from his corner, "that is a quare blessing intirely, comin' as it does from wan who is ordhered to drive all of us to the divil maybe for all that the Squire cares. Well, well! sure we are all Christians together, so I say, God save you kindly! an' let there be no bad blood betune us. Arrah! Mr. Moran, 'tis no good offerin' me that bit o' paper; sure I could not read a screed o' writin' at all, at all, an' 'tis the same wid the boys. Faith, we all know what it is ye are doing. The Squire is after evictin' us, an' sure we must abide by the law. Yes, we will go quietly, for of coorse we know we are in the Squire's debt. But faith, boys, who knows but that toimes may be after changin'? Who knows but we may still an' all pay his honour Squire Burke the debt we owe him, aye, an' wid the inherest too, eh, boys?" and the old rascal looked significantly into the eyes of his elder son.

Mr. Moran, being in a hurry to return to his own fireside at Coolreagh, was naturally very well satisfied with the Heffernans, whom he characterized as law-abiding men; so, having placed a man in possession, the sub-sheriff left the place, observing as he did so that the evicted peasants were all moving away in the direction of Inniscarra. It was—Mr. Moran thought—a touching illustration of the inherent submissiveness and docility of the Catholic Irish peasant, and the man of law felt inclined in his inmost heart to condemn the Hon. Ulick Burke even more severely than he blamed Mr. Cator. The latter was an Orangeman, the son of a Souper, from whom such unfeeling, callous conduct might almost be expected, but the Burkes of Knockmore, though Protestants, were High-Church people, and by no means fond of the memory of William the Dutchman.

A few weeks after the evictions the stable-keeper at Knockmore Castle was horrified one morning at finding Miss Eva's own horse, a magnificent specimen of the Irish hunter and having a fine pedigree, lying dead in its stall. The poor animal had been foully butchered by some one who had climbed up to and crawled through the ventilator at the eastern gable, and who had subsequently escaped by that way. Of course, as the ventilators in both gables were about twenty feet from the ground, it was evident that the scoundrel must have had accomplices, and that a ladder had been brought from some other part of the premises. There were absolutely no traces of the criminals, and the Squire had to console himself with the reflection that he had aroused and stimulated against himself the implacable hatred and remorseless fury of brutal men whose innate ferocity would probably stop at nothing barbarous or inhuman that might be perpetrated with impunity. A large reward was offered for information that would lead to the discovery of the author of the outrage, but of course no such information was received. About a month after the killing of the horse, certain cattle on the Cator estate were mutilated in a shocking manner, while scarcely a week went by without nocturnal raids on the houses and holdings of the well-disposed tenantry, many of whom were compelled by the direst and most sanguinary threats to swear that they would not pay the full rents due their landlords. Never before,—not even in the unhappy years between Emancipation and the great Repeal agitation,—had such a reign of terror obtained throughout the district. As a resident magistrate Maurice Desmond was, of course, compelled to exert himself in support of law and order, but the measures of the leading agitators were so well taken that comparatively little good was done by the arrest of various persons suspected of having been concerned in acts of outrage and violent assaults.

Acting as clerk to his cousin, our hero was not long in making the discovery that, at least in Ireland, amphibology and equivocation were practically as well-known to the mrses as they were to the most erudite scholar in the moral theology of Rome. Despite the gravity of the charges under consideration, it was difficult to repress a smile when an unwilling witness, with an affected alacrity, came forward to take the oath, and lifting the New Testament to his lips, contrived very dexterously to kiss his own thumb instead of the book. With

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the shrewdness and cunning so characteristic of the Irish peasantry, the witnesses often practised the most subtle artifices, showing clearly enough that they felt themselves morally justified in availing themselves of equivocation and mental reservation, and that their maxim was similar to that ascribed by Aristophanes to the sophists in the well-known formula,—*he gloss' omomoch', he de phren anomotos.\**

Lieutenant Wallace had spent his Christmas at the castle, accompanied by his wife,—a good-looking, quiet little lady very much younger than her husband,—and their daughter Clara. The fact that the country was said to be disturbed made no impression whatever upon Mr. Wallace, for, as he subsequently remarked to the Squire, he could not, so far as he knew, remember when Ireland was ever reported as being free from disorder. In the person of Hugh's friend Mr. Burke found a wholesome opponent of those ultra-Tory opinions which tolerated no middle way, and which attributed the misfortunes of Ireland almost wholly to the policy of yielding to popular clamour every "safeguard of the constitution," one after another, a policy inaugurated, affirmed Mr. Burke, on the 13th of April, 1829, when the King of England was prevailed upon to assent to a measure promoted by the vilest artifice and most nefarious methods. Whenever they met,—which of course was not seldom,—a warm discussion ensued between the two gentlemen, and Eva Burke solemnly avowed to Lady Blanche and Mrs. Wallace her conviction that these argumentative conflicts were of great benefit to her father, leading him to expend therein energies which might otherwise be manifested in some ill-judged act of retaliation against those whom he suspected of being at the bottom of all the outrages by which the district had been disgraced.

One evening in January there sat with Mr. Burke around the hospitable table in what was styled the punch room at Knockmore,—a small apartment to which the genial host often retired with his cronies after dinner,—Squire Maurice, our hero, Lieutenant Wallace, Dick Furlong, and the district-inspector of police, Mr. Tyacke. The morning's post had brought a threatening letter to Furlong, filled with ungrammatical, but none the less forcible denunciations of vengeance upon him and his unless the rents of the cottages near the

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\* "The tongue it hath sworn, but the mind is unsworn." See on this subject "Theologia Moralis S. Alphonsi de Ligorio," *passim*.

mills were lowered within a month. The honest miller, Dick's father, was a peace-loving, timorous man who, under the influence of his apprehensions, would have immediately notified his mill operatives that he was willing to meet them half way in an amicable spirit. His son, however, whose reputation for courage had fallen considerably since the affair at the fox-hunt, thought the occasion a favourable one for rehabilitating his character among the gentry, among whom he had been seldom seen during many months. Therefore Dick blustered a little over the letter, indignantly protested against the poltroonery of yielding to threats which might have,—as he fervently hoped was the fact,—emanated from the mischief-loving brain of some local *shaughran*, and ultimately betook himself to the police-station at Inniscarra, where he laid the minatory missive before the district-inspector. This officer was by no means inclined to make light of the letter, which, however uncouth of phrase and contemptuous of grammar, was nevertheless written in a clear hand,—not such a handwriting, thought Mr. Tyacke, as that of the ordinary peasant. There was, moreover, by way of signature, a not unskilful delineation of a coffin, and the usual skull and crossed bones, known throughout Ireland as a “raw head and bloody-bones,”—a signature significant enough to an imaginative mind. The police officer at once saw that the handwriting might eventually lead to the discovery of the writer, and he at once advised Furlong to consent to his bringing the matter under the notice of the nearest justice of the peace. To this proposal Dick having readily agreed, they proceeded to Carrig Desmond to consult with the Squire. Having read the letter the magistrate gave it as his opinion that it really was a genuine threatening letter.

“I am quite of your opinion, Tyacke,” he said, “that this may become the means of unearthing the instigators of much of the mischief perpetrated of late. Suppose we drive over to Knockmore,—my cousin and Lieutenant Wallace are there to-day,—and hear Burke’s opinion? You can then lay an information, Dick, my boy, after which Tyacke will be free to act according to his judgment.”

“Just as you please, Squire,” said Dick; “I have done my duty in the matter so far, and I am not disposed to allow the rascal to think he has terrified us. There are only two of us at home, however,—father and myself,—so perhaps it would



be as well if the inspector could station one or two of his men in the house. Of course, I am not afraid, but father is an old man and—"

"Never fear, Mr. Furlong," said the inspector, "that shall be seen to all in good time. I think if they make up their minds to do you an injury, they will probably try to fire the mills, but it's likely that we shall spoil their sport this time."

"Precisely so," observed the Squire, "forewarned is forearmed, you know, Dick. But let us be off, for here are the horses."

"Business of importance, eh?" said the Hon. Ulick Burke, to Squire Maurice, on the arrival of the party at Knockmore.

"Hang me if I attempt to transact business of any kind immediately before dinner!" and the old gentleman was as good as his word. In the drawing-room they found Hugh Desmond, the Lieutenant, an army officer from Kildare, and the Protestant rector of Knockmore. The ladies present were the Hon. Mrs. Burke,—a very dignified, stately old lady of the blood of the Geraldines,—her daughter Eva, Miss Amy Cator, and Mrs. Powis, the rector's wife. Dinner had already been announced, and as the new-comers had only to be made known to the military man, in a few minutes the party duly filed off toward the dining-room. The dinner was somewhat formal and sober, the army man,—who was Miss Cator's cousin,—stolidly resisting any attempt to draw him out upon any subject whatever. When it was over, of course the magisterial business had to be attended to, so that only two of the gentlemen, each representing militant bodies,—the church and the army,—rejoined the ladies, because Mr. Wallace was always asked to participate in such councils.

Justice having been done to the Knockmore punch, the object of Mr. Maurice Desmond and his company in coming to the castle was duly stated and the letter once again inspected and criticized. Dick Furlong, somewhat restored in his own good graces by the kind reception accorded by Mrs. Burke and her daughter, and by the evident desire on the part of Miss Cator to atone, as far as she could, for her brother's conduct, was in good spirits, and he even went so far as to express his conviction that the letter was nothing more than a practical joke.

"No, no, Dick," said Mr. Burke, "I think you are mistaken there. It is probably a genuine attempt to scare your father

into a reduction of rent, and therefore I should be disposed to look for its author among the cottagers on the mills."

Dick shook his head very doubtfully. "I can hardly think so, Mr. Burke," he answered, "because all our men are quite contented and comfortable. Their rent, maybe, is a little high, but sure he would be an ungrateful wretch who would threaten so good-natured a master as my father is."

"By St. Kevin! you are right there, Dick, my boy," cried Maurice, "for your father pays good wages, which they all know,—I mean his men do,—average the whole year through higher than those paid in the big centres of commerce. But who the devil would bear a grudge against the old man?"

During this conversation Lieutenant Wallace had been quietly examining the letter. Drawing forth his pocket-book he took from it a dirty blue envelope which he proceeded to compare with the cause of Mr. Furlong's anxiety. Then he placed both papers before our hero, who uttered a low exclamation of surprise, while in obedience to a sign from Mr. Wallace the papers were laid on the table before Mr. Tyacke. The moment his eye fell on the soiled envelope the district inspector was startled out of his propriety. Starting to his feet, and waving both documents above his head, he exclaimed:

"By God! gentlemen, 'tis the same handwriting. I would swear to it anywhere."

"Whatever do you mean, inspector!" inquired Mr. Burke, somewhat gravely.

"I beg your pardon, Squire," returned the officer, "and yours, Mr. Desmond, too, but this envelope, just given me by your cousin, will prove, I am thinking, the key to this mystery and perhaps to many others," and he handed both letter and envelope to Maurice, who held them up to the light for his own and Mr. Burke's examination.

"You are certainly right, Tyacke," said their host; "it seems to me that the point is indisputable. Are you of my opinion, Mr. Desmond?" he asked, turning towards his brother magistrate.

"Indeed I am," returned Maurice. "I think, too, that I could swear to the identity of the handwriting on both."

"In that case, we will take Furlong's information," said the eager old gentleman, "and let the police apprehend this fellow as soon as they can."

"Take the information as soon as you like, Mr. Burke,"

observed the more methodical Maurice, "there will be no trouble in that; but first I would very much like to be told where this old envelope so opportunely came from."

"From Mr. Wallace's pocket-book, cousin," said Hugh, "for I saw it taken from there, but I know nothing more concerning it than that."

"Bedad: we are on the very verge of another and a darker mystery, it seems," said Maurice; "Mr. Wallace, we turn to you for light. Where on earth did you get this thing?"

"From Father Tom Cahill," replied the Lieutenant, with a mile.

"Father Tom!" cried all the gentlemen *una voce*, "but do you know how he got it?" the last question proceeding from the inspector.

"I will tell you, my friends, if you will be patient," said the Lieutenant, who dearly loved to tell a story. "It was found last July in the jaunting-car by Tim Darragh, who can prove to your satisfaction that it was dropped therein by a man to whom he gave a lift on the Coolreagh road. Tim, who is not half the fool he looks and pretends to be, found this envelope on the seat a few minutes after the man got down, and when he got to Coolreagh he gave it to Father Tom, who,—having heard me claim a previous acquaintance with the fellow in question,—saved it and subsequently gave it to me. I,—being an Englishman, you see, Mr. Burke,—thought that some of you impulsive, scatter-brained Irishmen might one day be likely to find this old torn envelope useful, and so I kept it. Well, here it is with its torn address: '*Mr. Fr. McCaffrey, 99 Avenue de Villiers, Paris, France.*' Well, gentlemen, you perhaps would like to know—"

"For the love of heaven! cut it short, Lieutenant Wallace," exclaimed Mr. Burke, excitedly, "and tell us the name of the man who took that ride in the car with Tim Darragh. Who was the fellow?"

"It was," said the other, and he, too, raised his voice in the excitement of the moment, "it was a man you all know very well,—Pat Shine, the grocer at Inniscarra."

"Damnation!" roared Mr. Burke, sweeping his glass to the floor in his excitement, "then all my suspicions are about to be confirmed at last. Well, Mr. Shine, I think we can trap you now."

While the old gentleman was speaking, and just as Mr.

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Wallace was about to resume his chair, a loud explosion was heard and the lord of the mansion and the Lieutenant became suddenly conscious that a rifle or pistol bullet had passed between their heads and buried itself in the wall. Almost before they realized the situation the window of the punch-room was thrown up violently, and Inspector Tyacke, followed by Hugh Desmond, plunged forth into the night.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### IN WHICH OUR HERO LEAVES HIS COAT ON THE GROUND.

AS his feet touched the ground, Mr. Tyacke felt our hero's hand upon his shoulder.

"It is you, Mr. Desmond," he said, "it will not do for us to stand outlined here against the light, or the cursed rapparee will have another shot at us."

Both men, therefore, darted across the terrace to the parapet-wall which separated it from the lawn and shrubbery. The inspector was on the point of advising Hugh to notice where the coping had been displaced when our hero shouted :

"I see him ! there he is, making for the Plantation !" and in a moment Hugh had leaped from the wall and hurried at his utmost speed in the direction taken by the would-be assassin. Mr. Tyacke, himself no less excited, also vaulted over the low parapet and joined in the pursuit. He had hardly run a dozen yards, when the big bell of the castle, that was only tolled in the event of fire, or the decease of a member of the household, rang out a deep alarum, while numerous lights appeared in front of the grey old castle. The inspector, who was somewhat too bulky to run fast, saw clearly enough that the startled guests and domestics were utterly at a loss in what quarter to prosecute their exploration, and the dense, fine rain that was falling made it impossible to see more than a few yards ahead even in the path of the lantern's rays. Placing a hand on each side of his mouth, and thus forming a sort of speaking trumpet, Mr. Tyacke cried :

"This way, this way ! right across the drive toward the Plantation. This way, for God's sake, hurry !"

"Is that you, Tyacke ?"—the inquiry coming from Mr. Burke.

"It is, sir; but I can stay no longer. Mr. Desmond saw the fellow and is off in pursuit. Scour the whole of the grounds at once. I must be off!" and the inspector once more started off in the direction taken by our hero.

"My consin is, I fear, unarmed, and we must not delay a moment," said Squire Maurice, evidently labouring under strong excitement. "We have a murderer, at least one in intention, before us, and I tremble at the thought of my cousin having to confront him alone."

"Yes, yes, there must be no delay," cried Mr. Burke; "forward, boys, one and all! twenty pounds to the man who takes the bloody-minded villain! Spread all over the Plantation, and keep your ears open!"

"The rain has stopped," said Mr. Powis, who had been standing bare-headed all the time, "and the clouds are breaking. See, there is the moonlight."

"Run in and stop that bell, Powis, if you will," said Mr. Burke, "and re-assure the ladies. Tell them we are sure to catch the rascal," and the old gentleman hurried away after the others.

Knockmore Castle, besides being so many centuries later in point of origin, was much larger and more pretentious than Carrig Desmond. In 1255,—hardly a century after the first Norman crossed the Irish Sea,—the castle was besieged and taken by the two great septs of the O'Byrnes and the O'Tooles. The gallant little garrison, under Hubert de Burgho, refused to surrender, for they well knew that Domnal Dubh, the chieftain with the mermaid crest, who led the besiegers, was the grandson of the O'Byrne who forty-six years before, on Black Monday, had massacred the Bristol colony in Cullen's Wood. Therefore, when the fierce tribesmen,—disdaining alike sword and arrow, battle-axe and partisan,—led by Black Domnal, swept torrent-like through portal and over battlements, the Norman Hubert and his Saxon men-at-arms invoked no clemency, but died loyally and bravely, fighting to the last. The fierce Domnal Dubh demolished the fortress, and when subsequently another and a more fortunate De Burgho built for himself another castle on the picturesque *cnoc* or hill, the building was in every respect superior to its predecessor. In more modern times, a more peaceful aspect had been given to the house, and bay-windows and a sort of nondescript portico enhanced its comforts even though they marred its architec-

tural proprieties. Beyond the wide carriage-drive, the so-called Plantation extended over the whole south-western side of the hill, which was here very rough and broken, and in some places craggy and precipitous. Mr. Burke had considerably modified the harshness of this part of his domain by the practice of judicious forestry, so that instead of being a sparsely-wooded, irregular waste it was now a beautiful grove of magnificent forest-trees.

As he rushed across the drive into this miniature forest, the moonlight, streaming ghostly-wan through the rift in the clouds, enabled Hugh Desmond to catch another glimpse of the fugitive. The fellow had reached the border of the grove, and was evidently making toward a gigantic oak, whose colossal trunk would at least afford temporary concealment and thus give him time to contrive a scheme of baffling and frustrating his pursuers. The dark body was almost in line with the tree when the report of Hugh's ready pistol rang out its challenge, evoking responsive shouts which, while assuring our hero that his friends were at hand, taught the fleeing culprit upon what side he should endeavour to effect his escape. With a smothered curse, the fellow cast away the rifle he had been carrying at the trail, and darting behind the huge tree he ran swiftly forward toward the left hand, keeping as near as possible to the edge of the grove, evidently under the conviction that his pursuers would all hasten into the heart of the Plantation. The season, however, did not favour concealment among deciduous trees,—it was absolutely necessary for the man to keep moving. At whatever risk he must increase the distance between himself and his hunters, now that the cloud-veil was being so swiftly withdrawn from the countenance of the cynical moon, whose light he vehemently cursed.

In the meanwhile Hugh Desmond had reached the large oak. Instead, however, of rushing straight onward into the wood our hero paused to consider. The clearer light enabled him to discern the rifle which lay almost at his feet, and taking up the weapon Hugh found blood on the lock and trigger-guard. This he regarded as an indication that his bullet, fired at random, had hit the assassin on the hand or arm. He laid the rifle against the tree and listened attentively for the sound of breaking twigs or trampled leaves. As he bent eagerly forward he distinctly heard the sounds he had expected, and his ear told him that the rascal was skirting the wood.



As swiftly and as noiselessly as he possibly could, our hero followed, darting from tree to tree, and pausing at intervals to listen. Despite the excitement of the occasion, Hugh smiled to himself at the involuntary recollections suggested by the pursuit. Fenimore Cooper's wondrous Indians with their trail-discerning keenness, Kaffirs with a hound-like scent for "spoor," and other extraordinary reminiscences drawn from those mental store-closets wherein in his childhood he had collected such hoards of fiction and travellers' tales, came thronging before him. However, these images suggested caution, and Hugh, while making rapid progress, had begun to indulge the hope that his own immediate proximity was not suspected. Accident, however, dispelled this opinion, when a large dry branch, torn from the parent trunk by some recent storm, snapped loudly under the young man's foot. At this extremity of the hill scarcely a sound could be heard from those who, under the conduct of the Squire of Knockmore, were exploring the wood, so that the crack of the withered branch was as distinct as the sound of a bell. The fugitive heard it, and it added to his speed, while both men had caught a glimpse of one another. The one was straining every nerve for liberty, the other was experiencing the terrible excitement, the savage and pitiless pleasure which always renders man-hunting a sort of ferocious delirium. Both felt instinctively that the end was at hand, for both men knew well that their course must shortly terminate at the verge of the Plantation, where Knockmore Crag hung boldly over the breen or farm-road.

From the extreme southern edge of the Plantation, where the grove ended, to the Crag, there extended an almost level stretch of rough heather of about two hundred yards in width. It was absolutely necessary that the fugitive should cross this plateau, because the particular conformation of the hill was such that had he turned to the right, in the hope of escaping by the western portion of the wood, a run of one or two minutes would probably place him near the main body of his pursuers. The brief, momentary view he had secured of the inexorable avenger behind him convinced him that he was a man much younger than himself, and presumably, therefore a much swifter, easier runner. Nevertheless, the trial had to be made, for the assassin had reason to hope that his escape could be easily effected were he fortunate enough to reach the breen. He did not, therefore, hesitate an instant upon

reaching the margin of the plateau, but with fear-impelled feet he darted forward into the open moonlit space. Almost simultaneously, Hugh Desmond sprang on to the heather, and as he did so he paused for a moment. Not twelve yards distant was the miscreant who had so recently endeavoured to perpetrate a most atrocious murder. Our hero was not very well acquainted with the nature of the ground before him, but he saw clearly enough that he could claim every other advantage. Rather with the view of drawing the others in this direction, he once more fired at the man, and then resumed his pursuit. Untouched by the deadly missile, the fellow kept on his way, having profited very sensibly by Hugh's slight delay. In all such contests, however, the race will be to the young, lithe and lissom, and it was with a despairing feeling that not even desperation could save him now that the hunted one turned to bay on the very brow of the crags, thirty feet or more above the rude little lane to which he had looked for refuge. In his right hand he held a large pocket-knife, and as he stood there on the very brink of the rock, with head thrown back and arm extended, he certainly seemed a sufficiently formidable antagonist. Nothing deterred or daunted, however, by a demeanour that he had but little leisure to notice, Hugh Desmond rushed upon the fellow. The cruel knife was raised in air and fell gleaming downward, but the wrist of the desperado was clutched in our hero's grasp, while the barrel of Hugh's revolver fell right across the other's forehead.

"Ha!" exclaimed the young man, "ha! I know you. By heaven! Pat Shine, if you do not yield I will shoot you like a dog!"

"Damn you!" returned Shine, hoarse with rage, fear and want of breath, "damn you! for a spy and an informer. Let go my arm, for, by the living God! I would give myself up with pleasure could I only wance knife you, you Sassenagh Scotland Yard hound! Let go, I say!"

The struggle of these two men was brief, but awful. Of the two, there could be no doubt that the Agitator was the stronger, albeit any advantage this might have afforded him was more than counterbalanced by the agility, suppleness and superior height of his antagonist. Moreover, Shine was still panting violently,—after one's fortieth year it is seldom wise to emulate Milo of Crotona, and the Agitator was more than

fifty years old,—and his left hand had been seriously injured by Hugh's first bullet, which had glanced along the knuckle and, temporarily at least, incapacitated the limb.

Had the revolver been cocked, our hero would have summarily ended both the conflict and the career of Mr. Patrick Shine. An American frontiersman would have found no difficulty under the circumstances, but our hero's experience with lethal weapons was of comparatively recent date. The blow across his forehead drove the Agitator frantic with rage. With a terrible howl of anguish and fury he wrenched his wrist out of the young man's grasp and threw himself forward, doubtless with the intention of clutching at Desmond and of stabbing him to the heart. At the same instant our hero also aimed a vigorous blow at Shine, so that the bodies of both men came into violent collision, and the combatants fell to the ground, the knife in Shine's hand catching in Hugh's coat as they fell. Fortunately for himself, our hero was uppermost, and it was no less happy for him that the Agitator's left hand had been rendered useless, so that he was compelled to drop the knife and seize Hugh's collar in order to prevent him from rising. Neither of the combatants thought for a moment of their situation; they fought so savagely that neither felt able to utter a single word. Desmond contrived, by bringing his hands together over his head, to raise the hammer of his pistol, but in order to do this he had, of course, to relinquish his grasp of the other's neckerchief. It was Shine's last, his only remaining chance, and with an almost superhuman effort he succeeded in half raising himself thereby causing Desmond to roll over on his side at the very brink of the precipice. Involuntarily, as it seemed, our hero snatched at the arm of the Agitator, which he grasped convulsively, the very ground appeared to give way under them, and both men went rolling and crashing down the rocky steep. As they rolled down the incline Hugh's weapon exploded, after which, so far as his own consciousness was concerned, everything was a blank to our hero for a period whose positive duration he never certainly recognized.

. . . . .

Fifteen or twenty minutes afterward Mr. Tyacke and Dick Furlong,—having rightly divined the quarter whence the shot

was heard, oftentimes a difficult accomplishment in a wood, arrived at the Crag. Dick having found Shine's knife on the ground, the men made a careful examination of the spot, and the experienced eye of the district-inspector soon detected the traces of a struggle. Ere long Mr. Burke and his brother magistrate, with nearly all their following, were also on the ground, and Mr. Tyacke expressed aloud his conviction that either Hugh Desmond or the miscreant whom he had so determinedly followed,—or perhaps both of them,—would be found dead or dying in the breen beneath the Crag.

"Do not say so, Tyacke, I beseech you," said Squire Maurice, "I will not suffer any man to tell me that my gallant boy is dead, merely because he thinks so. Arrah! the light is good enough, will no one venture down the cliff? Old as I am, I will try it, if you are all afraid."

"Just wait a moment, Maurice, my friend," said Mr. Burke, placing his hand on the Squire's shoulder. "You see, as Tyacke says, there has certainly been a struggle here. There is the knife, the blood on the stones, and the two buttons which you recognize as having come from your cousin's coat."

"Yes, yes, but the blood proves nothing unfavourable to my cousin's safety," urged the other, "for you remember that the knife Tyacke found at the tree was bloody. The assassin was hit by Hugh, I tell you, but not seriously, perhaps. He has escaped this way, while my brave boy has started to find an easier way to the bottom."

"God grant it may be as you say," returned Mr. Burke, "but if any man has fallen down there he must be either dead or dying. Ha! Dick, why, that is brave in you! Take care, take care!"

Dick Furlong had in the meantime divested himself of coat and boots, and, with some help from the inspector, proceeded to make the descent. He no sooner relinquished Tyacke's hand, after lowering himself over the margin, than he slid down about twelve feet on to a huge boulder,—that struck by our hero in his fall. Gathering himself up, and giving his heart time to return from his throat, whither fright had directed it, Dick cautiously stooped until he was able to seat himself comfortably on the big stone. A sharp exclamation from him induced those above to peer over.

"What is it, Furlong!" asked Mr. Burke, "do you see anything?"

"I have found a pistol," answered Dick excitedly, "it has an ivory handle."

"It is my cousin's," said Maurice turning away to hide his anxiety and even tears, "I myself presented it to him soon after these troubles began. This is terrible. By heavens! Burke, I wish this had happened to me rather than that I should have to carry home the tidings. My poor boy! my poor boy!"

"One moment, Desmond," exclaimed Mr. Burke, "we must not take it as certain that your cousin is killed. It is a bad place undoubtedly; but harken! why I hear Furlong talking with some one. Cheer up, Maurice, my friend; the boy is alive after all, you will find."

Mr. Burke was not mistaken: from his seat midway down the declivity Dick had descried the figure of a man slowly making his way among the rocks and stones below. Though a sufficiently venturesome young man when riding, hunting, fishing, or climbing, Dick was no great challenger of peril when it manifested itself in the proper person of a human enemy. Instead of sliding down therefore toward the stranger, as he might easily have done now that the worst part of his descent was accomplished, the miller's son thought it wiser to hail him.

"Halloo!" he cried, "below there! halloo!"

"Halloo!" was the answer, "why do you remain perched up there! Can't you come farther down?"

"Who are you?" inquired Dick, somewhat re-assured as he thought he recognized the voice.

"It is I, Lambert Wallace," said the other. "Mr. Furlong, tell them up above that I found an easy descent about a hundred yards to the west."

Considerably relieved, Dick gave the required information, and almost as soon as he himself was able to place himself by the side of Mr. Wallace the remainder of the party had made good their descent.

"Mr. Wallace," cried Squire Maurice as he reached the ground, "have you found anything? Surely you must have found something?"

The Lieutenant, deeply grieved by the mystery attending the untoward fate of his friend, shook his head in silence, and the whole party proceeded to examine the ground between the Crags and the breen. Nothing, however, was found except

Hugh Desmond's coat,—evidently cut near the collar, where two buttons had been shorn away, but without any bloodstains,—and a rough cap of which the inspector assumed the custody. The breen or lane approached the Craggs by an easy grade from the point on the Coolreagh road known as the Holy Well; and deflecting eastward from Knockmore it wound its way among the various holdings and past the many cabins on the estates of Mr Burke and Mr. Cator, being finally lost at the base of the foot-hills of the western spurs of the great Wicklow mountain chain. Diligent search was made along this road in both directions. Toward the Holy Well there was absolutely no sign of anything suspicious, but about a quarter of a mile east of the Craggs wheel-marks and footprints were discovered. After a hasty consultation and collation of opinions it was unanimously agreed that it would be quite easy for any one, by skirting the rocks, to attain this part of the lane without leaving behind him any trace whatever. The wheel-ruts, however, were plainly discernible, and the two magistrates at once gave the word to follow them as long as possible.

"I am afraid," said Mr. Burke, "that we are merely tracking Fannin's old potato-cart, but all the same we will go on."

"Fannin? Who is he?—a stranger?" inquired Maurice.

"The man I put in charge of Heffernan's place," replied Mr. Burke. "He is a quiet, steady fellow, in whose honesty I have perfect confidence."

"Yes," said Mr. Wallace, "but it does seem strange that these tracks should either begin or end just here. Depend upon it we are doing well to follow them up."

"If it be Fannin's cart," observed Mr. Burke, "we have not far to go, for yonder is Heffernan's, as it is called; yes, and by heaven! there is the very cart we have been looking for."

An examination of the rude vehicle revealed nothing more important than that it had been used within the hour, for the mud on the felloes was not even incrustated. This discovery, however, was surpassed by that made by the district inspector, who upon entering the cabin with a lantern found the temporary incumbent lying bound and gagged upon his own bed. Mr. Tyacke's exclamation of surprise brought the whole body of searchers to the house, and as soon as the man had been unbound Mr. Burke instituted a formal investigation, of which



the police officer took notes in a very official-looking book, which Fannin appeared to regard with some distrust.

"Bedad, your honour," he answered upon the first question being put to him, "my limbs are that cramped wid the tying I got that I can hardly move at all, at all, an' my t'roat is that dhry wid the rag that dirty divil forced into my mouth,—bad 'cess to him for his manners! say I,—that if any av the gintlemen have a flask of potheen wid ye, maybe I might be favoured wid a taste."

The poor fellow had clearly enough endured much discomfort, and all present were annoyed when it was found that no such ready means of relief as that suggested was procurable.

"Confound it all!" cried the Squire of Knockmore irritably, "if we were a company of priests and parsons we should have been better furnished. Fannin, you must do your best, my boy, without the whiskey. Come, cheer up! Faith, when we get ye down to the castle ye may get what ye like from the butler."

"Thank your honour! sure I know that too; but, gintlemen, for the love of the Blessed Mother I must have a dhrink. Arrah, sir," said the man, turning to the Lieutenant, whose kindly look of sympathy perhaps attracted his notice, "there is a shelf there in the corner beyant the chimney."

"Yes, yes, my man, there is: I see it."

"Well, sir," continued Fannin, "an' do ye see a taypot there widout a handle to it? Sure,—Holy Mary, how dhry my t'roat is!—if ye will give me the taypot, maybe I may find a small dhrop o' potheen in it; sure I used to kape a toothful in the house for physic."

Lieutenant Wallace having done as he was requested, Fannin demonstrated the extremity of his thirst by forthwith swallowing nearly half a pint of undiluted whiskey. Mr. Tyacke laughed, and said:

"After that, Squire, you will find he can talk well enough. Remember, Fannin, your statement will afterwards be taken upon oath."

All that could be learned from the man, however, was that shortly after sunset four men, three with blackened faces and one with a mask, had entered the cabin and tied and gagged him almost without a word. Each of these men, he averred, carried a gun or a rifle, and after securing him they proceeded, as Fannin concluded from the sounds, to fasten his own horse

to the cart. In a very short time he heard them departing, although he was convinced that one of them must have been left behind, because the smell of tobacco smoke was afterward often perceptible.

"Yes," said Mr. Burke, "but do you think you recognized any of these men? Let me tell you that I have good grounds for suspecting their identity. Did you recognize any of them?"

"Wisha! Mr. Burke," replied Fannin in a half whining, half deprecatory tone, "does your honour think I could find thim out under their black skins and disguises? Bedad, your honour, if the boys heered that I informed against thim it's murdered I'd be widin a week. But, your honour, I assure ye that I do not recognize thim,—not any one of them at all, at all."

"Do not," inquired Maurice Desmond, struck with the man's evident fear of the moonlighters, "do not recognize them, Fannin? Of course not, because they are not here. But *did* you recognize any of them while they were in your cabin? Speak out, like a true man."

"Upon my soul, Squire!" cried the man, turning to Mr. Burke, "I nayther recognized them by their looks nor their voices, ayther inside or outside of my cabin: nayther whin they went away nor whin they kem back again."

"Came back again?" asked the Lieutenant, "why, did they return?"

"Of course they did," said Mr. Burke, somewhat testily; "surely, Mr. Wallace, you do not think that the cart trundled itself up the hill, do you? And how long since you last heard them, Fannin, eh?"

"Betune an hour and an hour and a half, your honour," said the man, now answering readily enough, and without amphibology, "and sure I think some of them must have been badly hurt, for I heered wan of them say 'Are they dead, think ye?' and another voice answered, 'Bedad, it looks loike it, but we have no toime to look or for discoorsin'.' And that, Mr. Burke, is the last I heered until the insapècthor and your honour's frinds kem up the hill."

Very earnestly and assiduously the ground about the cabin was searched and examined for further traces of the moonlighters. Not even the faintest sign, however, could be discovered, and it was generally concluded that Fannin's hypothesis was correct,—namely, that the scoundrels must have

had horses tethered somewhere in the rough heather beyond the enclosed land, and that consequently they had, at least for the present, made good their escape. Hoping almost against hope that his cousin was still in the land of the living, Maurice Desmond accompanied the party back to Knockmore, and it was after midnight when he and his friends bade the sympathetic household of Mr. Burke good-night. Inspector Tyacke and Dick Furlong, though requested to remain that night at Carrig Desmond, pursued their journey to the village, the officer being determined, he said, to ransack Shine's shop from top to bottom before morning.

As the two wound their way up the hill the Squire said :

"Lieutenant Wallace, I declare that I do not know how to break this awful news, but it has to be done at once, for see the lights there,—they are waiting for us! This is the most painful duty I have had to perform since Owen died ; but I trust to yourself to look as cheerful and hopeful as you possibly can, or faith! she may swoon away or even die with fright."

Blanche Desmond, however, did neither swoon nor die. She and Mrs. Wallace had passed the weary hours together in the library before a log fire, each refusing to acknowledge even to herself that something unusual must have occurred to detain the gentlemen. As they came up the old hall, preceded by Dan, Blanche Desmond missed the accustomed, expected footsteps. She met them at the door of the library, and as her eyes encountered those of the two men intuition told her that something had befallen her husband. For a moment her heart stood still, but summoning all her resolution she said :

"What has happened to my husband, Mr. Desmond? There has been some accident, I know."

They told her all they knew, omitting no detail, and both gentlemen and the Lieutenant's wife were instant with assurances that all might yet be well. She heard them all very attentively, and observed :

"Mr. Desmond, you must have the whole country scoured to-morrow. My friends, you sorely need a little rest, so you must retire at once. I will not believe that Hugh is dead until you can demonstrate it ; I myself will go with you to the police station after you have taken some rest."

"My dear," said the Squire, "your courage is inspiring. After all, we may take it for granted that the rascals will not

rouse the whole country by injuring my cousin. We shall find him in the morning."

Did they fancy that they consoled her by such assurances as those? What would they have thought could they have seen her anguish when alone in her chamber? could they have known that throughout the few hours' rest they endeavoured to secure for themselves ere the morning's work began Blanche Desmond's agitated mind was distracted by imaginative terrors and visions, in which the loved one was portrayed as lying cold and bloody in some wild mountain retreat, done to death in pursuance of the maxim that "dead men tell no tales"?

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### AS THE COLD OF SNOW IN THE TIME OF HARVEST.

N EARLY a week had gone by since the mysterious disappearance of Hugh Desmond, and nothing had been discovered that tended even dimly to explain the mystery. Every possible effort had been made, both by the police and by volunteer searching parties; detectives of known astuteness had been summoned from Dublin; the country throughout many miles around had been examined; but all to no purpose, the fate of the young man was unknown. Inspector Tyacke had not lost a moment in ransacking the house of Pat Shine, the only result of this domiciliary visit being the not unlooked-for discovery that the whilome grocer and shebeen-keeper had not been at home for three days, and the disclosure that the business, such as it was, had nearly a month previously been legally conveyed from Patrick Shine to Timothy Prendergast "upon sufficient consideration." Dennis Hefferman and his ill-favoured sons had, it was subsequently found, also left the district, but their departure had for some time been anticipated, as it was well known that they had long ago determined to transfer themselves and their fortunes to the United States of America.

During all this period of anxiety Maurice Desmond found unspeakable comfort in the unwavering confidence shown by Lady Blanche that sooner or later the lost one, her husband, would be restored in safety to his wife and friends. By a kind of beneficial contagion this hopefulness had spread to

Mr. Wallace, who, ardent in all things, scarcely allowed the Squire sufficient opportunity to lament, so eager and active was he in devising and superintending the fulfilment of a succession of exploration schemes remarkable alike for their ingenuity and comprehensiveness.

"It seems to me, Father Tom," said the Squire to the administrator, who had driven over to the castle early in the afternoon to make his customary inquiry whether any discovery had been made, "it seems to me that our poor boy has been spirited away and perhaps foully murdered. Yet his wife bears up wonderfully, and sets us all a noble example. Mrs. Wallace tells me that when Lady Blanche is alone she often breaks completely down,—you know that women have a keener insight and more discernment in such things than we have,—but I assure you that she inspires us all and encourages us to exert ourselves hopefully. Tyacke, however, was here this morning, and he says that the police can do nothing more, that they have no clue to the whereabouts of Shine or the Heffernans. Ah, Tom! it seems that the family is to die out. I can truly say that my cousin has grown as dear to my heart as my own son ever was. Depend upon it, Tom, unless we find him soon Blanche will break down suddenly, while if we find that he has been murdered the shock will kill her. However, if you will go in you will see for yourself, and Father Tom, perhaps it would be as well just to give a hint that she ought to be prepared for the worst."

They found Blanche, Mrs. Wallace and Clara discussing a communication dictated by Mr. Burke to his daughter. The honest old gentleman meant to impart consolation, but his letter consisted mainly of objurgations of the lawless persons who had, he wrote, probably added the murder of an innocent man to their other crimes.

"But, Father Cahill," said Blanche, after explaining the letter to the administrator, "had my husband been murdered by these misguided men I am sure we should all have known it long ago. I fear that Mr. Desmond and even Mrs. Wallace are only restrained by kindness from shaking their heads in pity at my unshaken conviction, which to them must perhaps appear like hoping against hope, although Lieutenant Wallace is at times even more sanguine than I am. But I cannot bring myself to believe that my dear husband is lost to me so soon."

The tears started to her eyes, but she overcame her emotion, and Father Tom would rather have died than have uttered a word to diminish the hope that sustained her.

"We will hope for the best," he said,—and his rich round voice was in itself consolatory,—“God forbid that you and my old friend here should have to endure an affliction so grievous. The terrible legacy of malice, hatred, and uncharitableness was bequeathed us from the period when, as Grattan said, Ireland was ‘a squabbling, fretful sectary, perplexing her little wits and firing her furious statutes with bigotry, sophistry, disabilities, and death.’ We are, it seems to me, all called upon to bear a part of the evil burden, but I hope, Lady Blanche, that you will not form too harsh a judgment of this unhappy country. They are precisely what we ought to expect them to be after so many generations of injustice. Even though it should ultimately prove that my dear young friend your husband has been harmed by some ignorant, indiscriminating avenger of some real or fancied wrong, will you not try to remember the *benigna oratio* of that Suffering One who said in extenuation of those who were putting him to death, ‘*Pater ignosce ; illis quod enim faciunt, nesciunt ?*’”

“I hope to be able to do this, if it should be as you suggest, Father Cahill,” replied Blanche. “In the manhood of Jesus my husband and myself recognize in many respects man’s highest ideal ; and so, while I may not pray for their forgiveness, I could assuredly pity and commiserate them for the mental condition which induced the lapse into crime. I think I am able to control my aversions, as I am my wishes, by those rules which I have learned under my husband’s direction and guidance. The teachers whom we most value and whom we have been studying are at one in their condemnation of revenge as an expression of rancorous antipathy. Oh, yes, Father Cahill, I think I can say that even were the light of my life extinguished in the way you suggest I should be mindful of the causes you mention. My husband and I have regarded these troubles by the light of reason *quæ docet et explanat*,\* and as a Rationalist I could indulge my sorrow without anathematizing the ignorant being whose hand had struck the blow. Surely, Father Cahill, you do not think that it is necessary to be a Christian to bear misfortune with fortitude ?”

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\* De Officiis, Lib. I., c. xxviii. 11.



"By no means, my lady," returned the administrator, "by no means. I well remember what Tully says of the main characteristics or attributes of the virtuous character, of the lofty, unconquerable soul in its magnitude and strength. It was I, my lady, who suggested the *Offices* to your husband as an ethical text-book, nearly a year ago; but I thought it was only Maurice that was to be the pupil."

"Which I have been likewise, Tom," said the Squire, "and I have profited much by the Sunday gathering in the hall against which Larry so violently protested in his first sermon after he left the castle for the presbytery. We have all been pupils of my unfortunate cousin, and it's well you know that he has already succeeded in making this time-worn old house of ours a centre of light for many in this vicinity. But here is Lieutenant Wallace returned from Coolreagh. Have you heard anything of the Heffernans, Mr. Wallace, at the station?"

"Nothing, except that the Inspector does not believe they have left the country," was the reply. "It seems they have means of ascertaining such things. How do you do, Father Cahill? Lady Blanche, his reverence's charioteer stopped me in the hall and urgently begged that I would say that he wished the favour of a moment's interview 'if you will be so condescending,' as Tim puts it."

"Confound the rascal!" cried the administrator, "whatever can he mean!"

"That I shall soon discover, perhaps," said Blanche as she went toward the door, "it is probably only some well-meant suggestion of his kindly heart, for Tim is a great favourite of Hugh's."

"Tom," said the Squire, when the door had closed behind his cousin's wife, "this terrible anxiety will drive me mad. There must come a time when she herself will begin to lose hope, and then, by St. Kevin! I shall wish myself dead. It is surprising how superstitious I am beginning to feel,—an old man like myself is, it seems, driven against his better reason by misfortunes such as this to fall back on the foundations laid in childhood and youth. You know I have scarcely looked at Horace since I left old Trinity, but only last night I happened to open a book on the library table, and my eye fell at once on a most lugubrious passage of Hannibal's prediction concerning Rome. I could not help applying it to my cousin,

to whom I have so long looked as the perpetuator and probable restorer of our ancient race.

"Occidit, occidit  
Spes omnis et fortuna nostri  
Nominis Hasdrubale interemto." \*

By St. Kevin! I am becoming so fatuous and imbecile that I shall soon be seeing tokens or hearing the banshee."

Meanwhile, Blanche Desmond, having thrown a shawl over her head and shoulders, had accompanied Tim Darragh to the terrace. It was evident to her that the man was labouring under strong excitement, and she felt instinctively that he at least believed that the communication he had to make was one of importance. As soon as they were beyond earshot of the house, Tim suddenly turned and said:

"My lady, I ask pardon for being so bould, but I have a saycret for your own hearing."

"A secret, Darragh? Tell me, does it concern Hugh my husband!"

"It may or it may not, my lady, the dear knows. But there is one in the grounds who can answer that, if your ladyship would but see him."

"One in the grounds, Darragh? I do not understand you. If there is anyone who wishes to see me, why should he be afraid to come to the house? Surely, Tim, you have not been drinking too much of Dan's whiskey?"

"Sorra a drop have I taken since the morning, my lady. But, my lady, I will leave it all to yourself; sure 'tis beyand my arrangin' entirely, so it is. Well, my lady, I had just done a little atin' down in the kitchen, and sure, as I always do, I had filled my pipe for a shmoke when who should come in but Mrs. Condon, the housekeeper. Bedad, my lady, she likes to-baccy as the divil likes holy water, an' so she says, says she, 'Tim Darragh, if you are after shmoking that dirty pipe here you will drive me out of the kitchen where I have business,' says she; an', faith, my lady, I said I would prefer to shmoke my dudheen in the open air. So I kem out, my lady, and having lighted my pipe I strolled down to the stables to have a look at Molly, and then I thought maybe she would not be

\* "Fallen, fallen, all the hope and the fortune of our name by the taking-off of Hasdrubal." Horat. Lib. IV., ode iv. 70.

after refusin' a drink,—more by token that I myself could have looked at a drink just then wid pleasure. So I went to the ould well, drew the water, and went around the stables for a walk back through the garden, when I seen a man beek'nin' me from the shrubbery. Howandiver, I see your ladyship is in a hurry, so I must tell you that this man is still there waiting to see your ladyship, if so be that your ladyship is not afeered."

"Tim," said Blanche, "do you think he has intelligence—any news that I ought to hear? If so, I will go."

"I am sure he has, my lady," replied Tim eagerly, "the saints be praised! I think he has good news; but your ladyship must go now and alone. Faix, my lady, I will go wid you as far as the shrubbery,—he tould me I might do so, but not a step nearer. Sure there is plinty of light yet left, my lady."

"Let us go at once," she said, and accompanied by the stalwart groom she turned away toward the shrubbery. It was but a minute's walk beyond the courtyard and the stables, and she walked boldly on toward the little copse, scarcely slackening her progress when she heard Darragh saying that he could go no farther, and exhorting her not to be afraid. As she neared the trees she observed a man standing in the gloomy cover they afforded,—a man whose heavy frieze coat was almost met at the neck by the brim of the old felt hat which he had bent down to conceal his features. Blanche stopped at some distance from this suspicious-looking fellow.

"Who are you?" she asked, "and what do you wish to say to me?"

"I am what the law, the tool of the oppressor, has made me," he answered, "an outcast and a fugitive. Time was, my lady, when I was as innocent as you are,—but I have not time to tell the story. I have for years been what they call a dangerous man, too, and faith! my name has for many years been pigeon-holed in Dublin Castle. Arrah! if I am a dog, then I am a true dog; I never bite the hand that feeds me. I am Dennis Heffernan, the man that you gave the money to, the day after we were evicted."

"Heffernan!" cried Blanche, "is it possible? Do you not know that you are being looked for everywhere?"

"Whisht! my lady," he said, "it's well I know that same; but they will not find me, I think. Let them say what they

will of me, lady, but I am not the hound they would make me. You sent me money,—bedad, I took it, though I had plenty, though never a *thransen* for the ould fool of a Burke,—and yourself and your husband gave us the offer of a cabin to shelter us. The ould Squire, too, Maurice Desmond, tried to be kind to us, but we did not want kindness just then. Howandiver, my lady, I am not wan to forget ayther kindness or unkindness, and in return for the good ye wanted to do me, I have, I may say, saved the life of the man ye love."

"Saved his life!" she cried, "my husband! do you know where he is? Oh, tell me all, I entreat you!"

"My lady, at the risk of my liberty I have come here to aise your mind. He is alive and well, of that you may be certain. Yes, my lady, alive and well, an' if the hounds of the law would only stop their hunting and searching, the gintleman could aisily be set free."

"Set free!" said Blanche; "then he is a prisoner in the hands of moonlighters? I was convinced that this was the case; but, Heffernan, how, if you cared for my husband, if you felt kindly toward us all, could you treat him so unkindly? Surely it was not your hand that fired the dreadful shot at Knockmore?"

"No, my lady, you are right; it was not I who did it, but another. This other man it is who has Mr. Desmond in his power. My lady, tak' my word for it that the surest way to satisfy that man's desire to have your husband's life is to folly up the hunt as ye have all been doing."

"Why should this man, whoever he may be, dislike Mr. Desmond so intensely?" asked Blanche. "However, Dennis Heffernan, I will rely on you to assist us; and, as far as possible, I will contrive that the search-parties shall be discontinued. You see, Dennis, that I trust you entirely, for I think I realize that you have been in some degree my husband's protector."

"God bless your lovely eyes, my lady!" exclaimed the moonlighter, "sure the blood that is in your veins is as pure as that of Fion Mac Cumhal. I knew ye would not betray me. And now, my lady, that I have your promise to draw off the police, I will convince ye that ould Dinnis is not such a *sceapp*\* as they say he is," and he handed Blanche a small

\* Low rascal or scoundrel.

many-folded bit of paper. "It is from your husband, lady. You cannot read it here, 'tis too dark entirely. And now what message will I be after takin' to him, your ladyship? Sure I can stay no longer."

"Tell him, Dennis, that I never before felt so happy as now,—that I have never believed him lost,—that I will be calm and patient until he is restored to me. Can you bear all this in mind?"

"Begorra, yes; but niver another word, I think, my lady," answered Heffernan.

"And, Dennis," continued she, "if, as I fear, you and your sons have been concerned in the cruel work that has gone on so long in this part of the country, let me entreat you to reflect upon its wickedness and, indeed, uselessness. Instead of strengthening your cause you only injure it, while the demand for justice can—"

"Arrah, my lady, you may be right," interrupted the old man, "but myself has nothing to do with the rights of it. We are all agents of them who are able to bear the responsibility, an' begorra they must bear it anyway."

"And who are these responsible persons, Dennis? Who can these be who are able to absorb the consciences of other men?"

"They are the Nation Makers," said the moonlighter, proudly, "the *Feis nan Erin*, the Parlymint whose laws are carried out without red-coats or police. God save your ladyship kindly! I thank you for your good words, my lady; but sure I cannot expect ye to think as I do."

Saying this, the moonlighter receded into the copse, being lost to sight almost immediately. Blanche Desmond also turned and hastened back to where Tim Darragh was patiently awaiting the end of this extraordinary conference.

"Darragh," said Blanche, "I am puzzled to know what induced this man to confide in you. Surely you, too, are not a member of a secret society?"

"No, my lady," answered Tim, "I want nothing to do with secrets or societies at all, at all. But could Dennis know me well, my lady, an', sure, he is Katie's uncle by the mother's side."

"Katie's uncle?" said Blanche. "Oh, yes, I think I know; you mean Katie Conroy, the National schoolmaster's daughter, do you not? Oh, yes, I understand."

It was now too dark for Tim's blushes to be seen, but Blanche Desmond knew enough of the character of the Irish peasant to know that nothing would have tempted her companion to betray the confidence reposed in him, while on his part Darragh also was assured that Lady Blanche more than suspected his love toward Katie Conroy. She made no further allusion to the matter, and as soon as possible they hastened back to the house. Brief as her absence had been, her friends were beginning to grow anxious. She found the drawing-room door open, but before entering the apartment, she perused the little note by the light of the chandelier in the hall.

It was indeed a message grateful to her anxious heart, a message to be received with gladness, although hastily scrawled with a blunt pencil on a leaf roughly torn from a pocket-book. The paper had been crumpled very much while in charge of the messenger, but heedless of this Blanche Desmond kissed it again and again. Throwing aside the shawl she had been wearing, she returned to the drawing-room. Her countenance, illuminated by joy, at once revealed to the Squire and his guests that she brought good tidings with her, and the old gentleman and Mr. Wallace sprang eagerly to meet her.

"Well, my dear," said Maurice, "you have good news? Is he alive? I am sure you have news."

"Alive and well," she said, the tears shining in her eyes as she spoke; "alive and well. Thank you, Clara dear, I am not going to faint," she added, as that young lady sprang to her side, "but I will read you my husband's letter."

"A letter!" cried Father Tom and the other gentlemen, "a letter! *Deo Gratias!*" added the administrator, "I could dance a hornpipe in the Vatican library, I think."

"Listen," said Blanche: "'My dearest: This is the fifth day of our separation, and I can imagine your anxiety. I am uninjured, however,—merely a captive. They will not dare to harm me, I think, and your receipt of this will show that even here I am not friendless. I hope in a short time to be home again. Ask cousin M. to bear in mind that my present safety lies in the security of my warders. The bearer of this will explain. Courage, dearest! H. D.'"

A hundred questions were about to burst around her, but Blanche anticipated them by saying:

"Cousin Maurice and friends, I cannot explain more than



Hugh's note does his present situation. My word is pledged to conceal the name of the person who brought this message, and I have undertaken that the pursuit shall be temporarily discontinued. You see, cousin Maurice, that Hugh hints that his safety depends on this. You will arrange all this, and we will possess our souls in patience until the prisoner is at liberty."

"For the present," answered the Squire, "a terrible load has been taken off our minds, so we must, as the only course open to us, await further developments. Mr. Wallace and I myself will run over to Inniscarra in the morning with the news, while Father Tom in passing the station may just as well give Tyacke a hint that we have heard from my cousin."

"And be sure, Father Cahill," said Blanche, "to say that my husband will probably be at home in a few days. The only thing I dread is that just at present the police will be too officious."

"Bedad!" said the administrator, "this is altogether a mysterious affair, but at all events, Maurice, your Hasdrubal is safe, so you may pitch your dreams and tokens, together with your *sortes Horatiana*, straightway to the—ahem! to limbo. I suppose, Lady Blanche, that I am not at liberty to put Tim Darragh to the question. Well, I too will be patient until my young friend's return; but in the meantime I wish I could find words to express the pleasure I feel that the Pride of Carlow, our Carrig Desmond Lily, has not to endure a great affliction."

"Thank you, Father Cahill," replied Blanche, "for the sympathy even more than for the compliment. Such blandiloquence, I fear, shows that your reverence has visited Blarney Castle. I should be loth to tell you, dear friends, how nigh the poor lily has been to wilting lately."

"All the same," said Father Tom, after the ladies had retired, "she is the Pride of Carlow, so before I leave this old castle of yours to-night, Maurice Desmond, I intend to drink defiance to the man who will not acknowledge that this English Lily is the queen of the parterre!"

## CHAPTER XXXV.

MEA CULPA ! MEA MAXIMA CULPA !

THE sun had just sunk behind the distant ridge of Slieve-bloom on the day of Blanche Desmond's interview with the moonlighter, when a man, enveloped in a shaggy frieze overcoat, was shown into Father O'Ruarc's room at the presbytery. The ruddy light of a coal fire made the small apartment seem cheerful enough to one coming from the chill, damp air outside, although it effected but little as an illuminating agent. As the door closed behind him, the visitor stooped down to the key-hole and listened to the sound of the old woman's retiring footsteps. Then coolly turning the key in the door, he stepped forward toward the little table before the fire-place, and removing his broad felt hat exclaimed, "*Sin fein !*"\*

"*Sin fein !*" returned Father O'Ruarc, who had not moved in his chair since the stranger's entry, "your voice will be after betraying you to any man, woman or child in Inniscarra who may happen to hear it. Why do you come here, now that your cursed folly has undone the work of so many months ? Do you not know that they are looking for you everywhere ? that they will have you, dead or alive ?"

"Never alive, *ma soggarth*,"† said the other, in a low, deep voice, and throwing open his overcoat, he pointed significantly to the breast pockets, where the red firelight danced and flickered on the metal-tipped stocks of two large revolvers. "But why do you talk of my folly, and of my having spoiled the work ? Is there not a fund for this kind of service, and is not a passage across the water made aisy if the bloodhounds are on the scent ?"

"I do not approve of such methods," said Father Lawrence, "and the time will come when the leaders themselves will discover that unnecessary acts of violence are worse than crimes, that they are blunders. I can imagine the nation being on the very verge of obtaining justice from England, and yet having to endure the agony of seeing the cup dashed from her

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\* "Only ourselves," or "Ourselves alone,"

† My priest.

like when those who have undertaken to steer us into port are accused of sharing the responsibility for such misdeeds. And you tell me now, Pat Shine, that you will not be taken alive. Faith, I do not know how that may be, but report says that the omadhaun who tried to shoot somebody in the punch-room at Knockmore was nearly captured in that way by Hugh Desmond."

"Aye, aye, Father Larry," cried Shine, "and let me tell you that report comes pretty near the mark this time. I ought to know, for it was I who undertook to hang around the party at Knockmore, while Dinnis and his boys waited over near his ould cabin."

"Then it was you fired the shot, was it?" inquired the priest. "Upon my soul, Shine, I thought you had more sense. Here have I for months been advising you how to conduct the process of intimidation systematically and with little more than a show of cruelty. And just at the moment when I had written to headquarters that our people would never again pay full rent and arrears, you and the Heffernans begin to gratify your own private grudges. The attempt upon Burke I could pass over, although we are not quite ready to get up such scares at present, but the killing of that hybrid cousin of mine has done more harm than good to the cause. It has made it absolutely necessary that you and Dennis should leave the country, and, indeed, I wonder at your boldness in tempting your fate so openly this evening."

"But, Father Larry," said Shine, stepping forward into the full glare of the firelight, and pointing to the long black artificial beard which covered all the lower portion of his face, and which was certainly a most effectual disguise, "sure I think there is niver a peeler in Ireland that would know me. I passed Tim Prendergast down by the grocery, and devil a look did he give me, at all at all."

"I acknowledge that you can get yourself up pretty well, Pat," answered the curate, "but for all that, every stranger is liable to be arrested on suspicion, so your risk is great. You will find it very difficult to get out of the country, and you are the only reliable man we have in this part of Leinster too."

"Faith," said the other, "there would have been no need for me to hide at all but for that spalpeen of hell, Tim Darragh," and Shine told all that he knew respecting Lieutenant Wallace's famous discovery of the envelope.

"And you allowed such a trifle as that to drive you out of your senses!" exclaimed the curate. "Why, man, they could never have harmed ye at all. Do you not know that the *Habeas Corpus* has not been suspended? There are twenty men around who would have gone bail for ye, and you would now be free from prison and from the crime of manslaughter. I will not say that I liked Hugh Desmond,—he was Anglo-Irish and an Infidel, and an enemy of God as well as of Ireland's just aspirations,—but I never wished him or indeed any man a violent death. But what have you done with the body? I tell you that we must, for the sake of the family, have it honourably buried. I will have it so," and Father O'Ruarc made an emphatic gesture indicative of this determination.

"Bedad!" exclaimed Shine, "that is why I have come here this night. He shall be honourably buried, wid all the Dalcassians and Eoganians, and the rites of the Church to boot, for what I care; for except he be buried divil another stroke can I or others do for the dear ould land. But before he can be buried, by God! Father O'Ruarc, he must be put out o' the way," and the fellow dropped his voice into a harsh whisper.

"In the name of heaven!" cried the priest, starting to his feet, "do you mean to say that he is alive?"

"He was an hour or two ago, at all events, Father Larry; but had it not been for ould Dinnis he would have been dead long ago, for dead men tell no tales. Heffernan insists that he shall not be quietened without we have your word for it, and I have to strike my colours to ould Dinnis sometimes. I have seen many a bould, steady man in my time, both afloat and ashore, and I have been in many a scrimmage, but I would not like to be the man to cross those same Heffernans without good reason and a sure backing. Wid a line of handwriting from yourself I can master them, but not without."

"Sit down, Shine, sit down, and tell me all about it," said the curate, in a low voice; "how did he fall into your hands that night? and where is he now?"

"Faith, he is about ten or twelve Irish miles up in the mountains," replied Shine, "in a saycret place known only to the old poteen runners. 'Tis but little better than a big hole in the rocks, but divil a safer hiding is there in all Ireland. He was not very wide awake when they got him there,—and, bedad, I was no better, what wid the fight and the tumble; but we have him secure enough" and the speaker in a few

words narrated all that had happened since the moment of uncontrollable passion when he himself had discharged his rifle in the direction of the tall shadow thrown upon the window curtain by the person of the lord of Knockmore.

"This is the strangest thing I ever knew," said Father O'Ruarc. "It will be impossible to keep him there very long, and the risk is too great. Have you come here for my advice? Well, Shine, you must get him to swear secrecy upon the crucifix,—see, you may take this for the purpose, it was blessed by the Holy Father himself,—giving him to understand the penalty of divulging anything. He must be made to swear before you let him go."

"To swear, indeed!" said the Agitator with a sneering, scornful laugh; "sure, 'tis yourself is after forgetting that the man is an Infidel, an Atheist, and that your oaths and crucifixes can have no terrors for him. And, begorra, as to making him swear, or do anything else he has no taste for, why thin, Father Larry, the divil himself could not do that same. I tell you that either he must be put out of the way or——"

"Put out of the way?" repeated the priest; "put out of the way? Why, man, you surely would not murder him in cold blood! If you dare to say——"

"Whist! your riverence," interrupted Shine, "not quite so loud, if ye plaze. I tell ye this, that if Hugh Desmond goes free I shall end my days in penal servitude. He knows too much, I tell you. I will sacrifice myself for the cause, when such sacrifice is necessary and the recompinse sure enough in the long run; but hell resave me,—saving your presence, Father Larry,—if I am fool enough to go to Spike Island, Portland, or Dartmoor, out of consideration for wan whom I know to be an informer and a Government spy! There, you have my mind, and sure, Father Larry, it's yourself knows that I mean what I say. If I am to be sould and given away by this spy, why others will have to go wid me. I am a pathriotic man, and a hater of the Sassenagh Government, but divil burn me if I am wan of those who pull chest-nuts out o' the fire for others to eat. You know that I have done honest work for the cause."

"For which you have always been well paid, Patrick Shine," said Father O'Ruarc, "and I am prepared at this moment to give you one hundred pounds to make your way easy acrossa

the water. At 'Madam's' house in Paris more will be forthcoming, and another department will be given you."

"But I prefer to stay in Ireland, I tell you," returned Shine, "and the more so because you yourself have said that they can never bring home that Furlong letter to me. What the mischief is this imp of Scotland Yard to you that you should place his paltry life before the success of the cause! Sure you know that they are not so squeamish elsewhere. You know that local centres are daily sentencing men to death for smaller reason than this."

The curate did not at once reply, but his mental perturbation was made sufficiently apparent by his long and hasty striding through the room. Returning to the fireplace, he stirred the coals energetically, and as the flame revived the Agitator keenly scrutinized the priest's pale countenance. It was, however, as impassive as that of the Sphinx.

"You have often told me that story about the visit of my cousin to Scotland Yard, and of his being in communication with the detective that you and Walsh so cleverly eluded in Queenstown," said Father Lawrence at length. "How do you know that there may not be some simple explanation of it all? After you came back from London so hurriedly, and your Fenian friend was conveyed away so secretly, there was never any suspicion here among the police; and, except that I have your own word for it, I would not have known that there had ever been a stranger in Inniscarra."

"Because you were then living at the ould castle," replied Shine; "but it seems that I left Queenstown some half a day before the detective, while Walsh went on to Dublin and was in hiding there until my return. Bedad, why will you not belave me! I tell you he is a paid spy, an informer: his release will ruin us all."

"The man is an enemy of religion, an Atheist, and excommunicate doubtless," said the ecclesiastic musingly, as though debating within himself, "and as the blessed Pope Innocent III. has said, 'Faith is not to be kept with him who does not keep faith with God.' I have given myself body and soul to this most holy cause, and I will persevere in it until absolutely, clearly, unmistakably forbidden by my superiors. Nevertheless, I will not have this blood on my conscience. I will be able at the last day to say, 'I am innocent of the blood of this man.' I will, so help me God and his saints!



There is the money I promised you. Go, let me see you no more; I will hear no further report from you or from Hefferman. Communicate if you will with headquarters, but remember that I no longer control your movements. What you may do will henceforth be done on your own responsibility. Do you understand?"

"All right," answered Shine, his eyes lighting up with a cruel, vindictive gleam, "let it be so. Give me the receipt. I will sign it, for I have a long tramp before me, and I am not so light as I was thirty years ago."

The signature having been affixed to a small square paper produced by Father O'Ruarc, the Agitator raised his collar up to his ears, settled his hat down almost over his eyebrows, and left the room. The priest listened attentively for the sound of the house-door closing behind his visitor, and then, lighting the lamp before him on the table, he took up his breviary. As the book opened in his hand, his eye fell on the last verse of Psalm liv.: "Viri sanguinum et dolosi non dimidiabunt dies suos; ego autem sperabo in te Domine."<sup>\*</sup> Nothing could better illustrate the cachexy of superstition, inherent and increased by special education, than the look of terror assumed by the priest as he read this passage. However rash and questionable may be the affirmative contained in the dictum *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*,<sup>†</sup> does not daily experience teach us that mental cowardice and the recognition of a God the Avenger compose at least a moiety of the ethical foundation,—that is, the average conscience,—of our era? "In all superstition," says Verulam, "wise men follow fools," because, perhaps, much of their wisdom is perforce expended in a sumptuary direction, or, perchance, diverted from earth and man's earthly interests,—the sight, as Plato expresses it, being turned to that which is above.<sup>‡</sup> However all this may be, let the true phrenologist§ determine,—enough for the chronicler to reveal the abject fear which almost caused the priest's brain to reel when he read this denunciation, a denunciation which the accumulated *deisidai-*

<sup>\*</sup> Psalm lv. of the Authorized Version. Thus rendered in the Book of Common Prayer: "The bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out their days; nevertheless my trust shall be in Thee, O Lord."

<sup>†</sup> "Fear first brought Gods into the world."

<sup>‡</sup> Cratylus: Opals as to ano, this "sight" or opals being the Platonic contemplative heaven."

<sup>§</sup> As distinguished from the obsolete humbug.

*monia*, the concentrated god-fearfulness which had been augmented with every generation of his race, compelled Father O'Ruarc to regard as being specially directed toward himself. In his heart he knew that he was thirsting for his cousin's blood; like Pilate, he might by washing his hands make profession of innocency, but how could he prevaricate or shuffle with the Most High? Oh, how his conscience lashed and scorched him! how those impressive words of the fourth Lateran Council burnt their meaning into his brain,—'Quidquid fit contra conscientiam, ædificat ad gehennam'! Yes, he was building for Gehenna,—his conscience told him that, and he fully believed that it was the Divine voice speaking within him, "a monarch in its peremptoriness, a priest in its blessings and anathemas."\* Grasping with both hands the crucifix whose efficacy Shine had so contemptuously doubted, the agonized and conscious sinner fell on his knees, exclaiming:

"Where, O Lord my God, shall I flee from thy face? where shall I hide myself from thy anger? who shall restore me to thy favour? Pater, peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opere! mea culpâ, meâ culpâ, meâ maximâ culpâ!"

For some minutes Father O'Ruarc knelt in prayer, and when he arose his mind was occupied by a new resolution, which he at once proceeded to fulfil. Hastily donning his overcoat, he took his stick, and left the presbytery, walking with his usual energy and vigour of stride straight through the village on his way to Carrig Desmond.

The administrator had for the third time drunk to the health, wealth and long life of the English Lily when old Dan ushered Father O'Ruarc into the reception-room. Apart from the fact that he had not visited the castle during so many months, the curate's countenance bore the traces of strong excitement, and the Squire's generous instincts at once assured him that his nephew had come to inquire after his cousin and to express his sympathy.

"Welcome, Larry!" he cried, advancing to meet his nephew; "why, this is kind of you. Dan, another glass or two here. Lawrence, sit down."

"Bedad, Father Larry," observed the administrator, "you have chosen a late hour to walk so far; why, 'tis well-nigh

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\* Cardinal Newman, "Letter to Duke of Norfolk," § 5, in which we find the supremacy of conscience acknowledged as no other Ultramontane champion will ever again dare to acknowledge it.

half-past seven, I declare. Dan, will you be after telling Tim to—

"Wait a minute or so, Father Tom, if you please," said the curate, "sure, we will go back together. Uncle Maurice, I have called to inform you that I have certain knowledge that your cousin, Mr. Hugh Desmond, is a prisoner somewhere in the mountains. Lieutenant Wallace, you will do well to ride at once to the police-station, and warn the police. You need not mention my name unless they demand your authority; they all know that a clergyman has certain sources of information which others do not possess."

The curate naturally expected that his announcement would have both surprised and agitated his audience. What, then, must have been his astonishment when no one started or otherwise manifested any emotion whatever! With a smile illuminating his broad visage the administrator said:

"Ye seem to have had a new experience as a confessor this evening, Father Lawrence, but you must be more discreet. Remember that this is not Italy or Austria, where the reports of confessions are sometimes required to be transmitted to headquarters. *Par le cordon s raphique* and the holy candle! you have been after bringing coals to Newcastle. Mr. Hugh Desmond is safe and sound, and in a short time we shall have the pleasure of seeing him and of hearing his strange story."

"All the same, nephew," said the Squire, "we thank you very heartily. It is just as Father Tom says; my cousin is safe and sound, and there is not the least occasion to bother Tyacke and his men any more. But come, will you not drink something to drive the fog out of your stomach?"

"Faith, Maurice," said the irrepressible administrator, "Father O'Ruarc does not seem to be in the best of spirits; it may be the fog, but it looks amazingly like fright. Bedad! I did not think he was at all nervous. However, Father Larry, my boy, if ye have seen the divil, take some good spirits as an alternative, and, if ye like, repeat an exorcism."

Instead of accepting the proffered hospitality, the curate waved his hand in repudiation.

"Uncle Maurice," he said, "I have obeyed the dictates of my conscience by coming to Carrig Desmond this evening; had I remained away my soul would have been in danger, it may be. But I will neither eat nor drink in this house, where, as I have reason to believe, the great Enemy of man has

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established himself, and where venomous darts have been forged and whetted against the Catholic Church, her faith and doctrine. However others may feel,"—with a sudden glance of his black eyes in the direction of his superior,—“I myself cannot in any way do that which might injure the spiritual interests of a weaker brother. It is not for me to say whether or not this household comes under the anathemas of the canons of the late Council, but this I will freely say, that the holy Apostle warns us that if we sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience in eating or drinking, we thereby sin against Christ.”

The boldness of this denunciation almost took away the Squire's breath, while Father Cahill, knowing how accurately his curate had given expression to the bigotry by which his mind was dominated, shook his head in sorrowful protest. Lieutenant Wallace, however, rising from his chair, proceeded to liberate his mind.

“Mr. O'Ruarc,” he said, “that you were a very devoted child of the Catholic Church I knew before the time when, on returning here to visit my friends, I found that your devotion had imposed a barrier between yourself and your relatives. Until this moment, however, I always thought you were a gentleman. I regret to find myself mistaken on this point.”

“Dan,” cried the Squire to his ancient servitor, “show Father O'Ruarc the——; but no, I will not respond in such an unworthy manner. Father Tom, take my nephew away with you or the *odium theologicum* will not prevent him from catching cold by walking out in the fog. Good night. *Wirrastrue*, Tom! he has it so strong that it will all the sooner burn itself out. Good night! good night!”

Whether or not the fanaticism now uppermost in the curate's brain was of too ardent a nature to be permanent this chronicle sayeth not. The erstwhile curate and patriot is now,—or was very recently,—a right reverend father in God somewhere in Australasia, his rapid advancement in the Church being doubtless facilitated by the conviction entertained among certain ecclesiastical dignitaries that the patriotic fire that burned within his breast was only too liable to scorch and consume his discretion. In the Roman Church of the nineteenth century the possibly-dangerous among the clergy have nearly always been killed with kindness. Use but a golden bit, and you may bridle many a refractory steed.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHEREIN CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT SHOWS HIS TEETH.

THEY called it *Leaba Righ*, or the King's Bed, because tradition said that one of the traitor princes of the tenth century, flying from the victorious and patriotic Murtach, had taken refuge in this cavern, from which he ultimately succeeded in escaping to the Danish stronghold of Dublin. Whatever foundation there may have been for the legend, there could be no doubt that the illicit distillers of "mountain dew" were mainly responsible for the construction of this cave,—that is to say, the original cavity or hole in the rock had, by the persistent labour and assiduity of these defrauders of the inland revenue, been considerably amplified and extended, while much ingenuity and art-concealing art had also been manifested in the direction of narrowing the outer crevice or aperture. The main chamber was an oblong of about fourteen feet long and perhaps half that in width. Its roof or ceiling had been made as nearly level as possible, the conglomerate rocks being supported by poles or props like those used by miners. At one end of this subterranean apartment stood a "still" with its cap removed, the "worm" or coiled tubing used to convey and condense the potent vapour, and some kegs, ladles, and various other implements used by the poteen makers lying in somewhat picturesque negligence at the base of the huge alembic. At the other end of the chamber there was a low opening, or rather a doorway, indicating what was really the fact,—namely, that there was yet another and more inner chamber, capacious enough to contain the bed of a king or to admit of some hundreds of gallons of mountain dew beingsnugly concealed and kept, in defiance alike of gauger's eye and nose.

It was probably just about the time when the two priests, on their homeward drive from Carrig Desmond, were nearing the presbytery that two men,—both evidently footsore,—approached the *Leaba Righ*. The older and taller man was evidently less jaded than his companion, to whom mountain-climbing was a form of exercise somewhat too exhaustive to be exhilarating.

"Begorra! Dinnis," said the younger traveller, "however

you can take your bearings here by night flummoxes me altogether. And up among these hills, too, wid nothing but the stars overhead and the broom, heather and limestone undher foot. Divil burn me! but I would be more at home on the Western Ocean in a jolly-boat an' that without a compass."

"The priests tell us," answered Heffernan, "that aich wan of us has his special gift from God. It may be so, but in my opinion, Shine, it is only a matter of bringing up and custom. Now, long years ago,—faith, it was just after the great repeal meeting at Galway,—I crossed Lough Corrib, and travelled on until I saw the sun setting in that same ocean ye spake of. It was a grand sight, to be sure, but it's meself cannot for the life of me undherstand how men can find their way across such a waste of water. But as for the mountains, bedad, I and the boys can find our way among them in the darkest night, just as aisy as could Dermait O'Duibhne."

"Dermait O'Duibhne! who the divil was he, Dinny?" inquired Suine.

"Begorra," replied Heffernan, "he was the spalpeen that ran away wid the wife of Fion MacCumhal\*, the great hairo who once ruled over the country, ages an' ages before the Danes. Fion pursued the *sceapp* over mountains, through bogs and across rivers, and ye may be sure that they must have had the good horses intirely to get away from such a runner as himself."

"Then he was a good runner, was he?" said Shine, thinking perhaps of his own tired legs.

"A good runner!" cried the old moonlighter scornfully, "is it Fion MacCumhal was a good runner? Arrah, man! he was the foremost runner and fighter of his toime, an' a giant into the bargain. Why, wan toime, whin his inimies were after burning his palace, he took his mother-in-law,—an' bedad, 'tis she was the heavy ould caillighe,† what wid aitin' the best and drinkin' whiskey galore,—and lifted her on to his own broad shoulders. 'What the divil are ye doing, Fion?' said the ould lady, as her son-in-law made her sit on his neck while he took a leg in aich hand in front of him, 'What the divil are ye doing?' 'By my father's sword,' an-

\* Pronounced Flinn MacCool, gentle reader. The old legend teacheth that in ancient Ireland, as in "great Lacedæmon enclosed by mountains," there were women who valued a perfumed coxcomb more than a chivalrous, magnanimous hero.

† Anglice,—an old woman, a hag.



answered Fion, 'tis saving your life I am after tryin', and then off he started, wid the inimy follying him wid their horsees and big Irish wolf dogs. Three days and nights did he run without stopping, and whin he outstripped his pursuers at last he cried *Fillelue!* for the joy of it. 'Mo. her,' he said to the ould lady, 'barrin' that the back of my neck is a thrifle too hot,' says he, 'I would be willin' to try thim another heat.' But divil an answer did the ould caillighe return, because ye see she was as dead as a herring. Ah! here we are at the Leaba, and, by St. Patrick, it's not sorry I am for it ayther.'

Nearly a dozen men were in the main room of the King's Bed when the travellers made their appearance. A few of them were playing cards, others were smoking, while one of Heffernan's sons was engaged preparing a savoury supper over a fire in the furnace of the still. Little or no smoke pervaded the apartment, thanks to the ingenuity of those who had adopted so many subtle devices to ensure the secrecy of their illegal operations in whiskey.

Patrick Shine, throwing off his heavy coat, which he hung on a spike in the rocky wall, took one of the three-legged stools and sat himself down at one end of the long rough deal table, while Dennis Heffernan went up to the cook and said something in a low tone and in Irish.

"He is in the other room wid the gintleman," was the son's reply, also in a low voice, "sure Jerry is not the boy to lose sight of him," and the fellow laughed, a coarse, disagreeable chuckle. Turning away from his hopeful offspring, the old moonlighter proceeded toward the farther end of the chamber. As he stooped to enter the low passage-way, a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and a look backward revealed the unprepossessing features,—far uglier now that the counterfeit whiskers were removed,—of Mr. Patrick Shine.

"Hould on, Dinny," said he, "I would like to colloague wid him a bit, too, *ma bouchal*. Faix, it's the last dialogue I shall ever have wid the gintleman, I guess."

Without answering, Heffernan again bent his head to the passage, which was only about four feet high, and the two men proceeded thus for nearly three or four yards until the inner apartment or storehouse was reached. The light of a paraffin lamp affixed to a rough tin sconce, which was nailed to the side or wall of the cave, threw a smoky glare over a collection of small barrels, two or three tubs, a bunker or small

bedstead of pine, and the form and features of two men,—the one being the hero of this narrative, Hugh Desmond, the other Jerry Heffernan, the moonlighter's younger son. The latter was standing near our hero, who sat on the rude mattress of his bed, and the aspect and demeanour of the gaoler indicated respectful attention and eager interest. Like other Irishmen of his class, Jerry was extremely loquacious, and being a perfervid politician, he was seldom at a loss for a topic. During the whole of his captivity, Desmond had been under the special oversight of this man, and the fellow's garrulity and inquisitiveness made the time pass less drearily than would otherwise have been the case. As his father entered the rough-hewn cavern, Jerry pocketed the map of America, concerning which country he had been making anxious inquiries.

"Thank you, sir!" he said, "but here are my father and Mr. Shine, who seem to want a word wid you, so I will go and see how Con is getting on wid the supper," and Jerry left his prisoner and without a word to the others betook himself to the outer chamber.

His position in the rear prevented Shine from catching the significant wink of the eyelids which old Dennis executed in secret telegraph to our hero.

"Well," said Hugh, "I see you are here once more, Heffernan, and with that hangdog scoundrel too, whom I verily believe to be capable of any crime. Make your communication short, whatever it be; at least I may claim to be relieved from the society of that double-traitor, who has sworn allegiance to his Queen and deserted her service, whose back even now perhaps carries on it the traces of the punishment inflicted for his treachery."

It was not perhaps very polite on Desmond's part thus to taunt the Agitator, but our hero could not refrain from expressing his dislike of the fellow, whom he regarded as being mainly responsible for the inhuman outrages which had so recently disgraced the whole district.

"Hard words break no bones, young man," grinned the Agitator, "an' sure we ought to allow a chained dog to bark. How the devil you know I was in the Queen's navy puzzles me entirely; but I suppose a government spy like yourself has means of knowing such things. As to my deserting, faix, I did so twice, and maybe more. Well, what of it? Sure they

have an Irish post in Ameriky who took the Queen's shilling and swore the Queen's oath, which he afterwards broke by becoming a Fenian. He was thransported to Australy, a chained felon, but afterwards he escaped, an' sure he is now a janius in Ameriky, a great man intirely, and no American despises him for having broken his oath. Arrah ! but why be talking ? sure all good Catholics know that one may swear to a thing without meaning it at all, at all.\* However, Mr. Hugh Desmond, you will not be troubled wid my presence much longer : I am just here to inform ye that we have been ordered to put ye out of the way. You are, they say, an Infidel,—if so, I pity you, and I advise you to make your peace wid God, for by all that is holy you will never leave this place alive."

Desmond looked,—somewhat anxiously it must be acknowledged,—toward Heffernan, who merely nodded and said :

"It is true, young man ; our own safety demands it. You see, we cannot risk the cause we are engaged in so far as to let you go, especially since you have refused to swear to become wan of us. We will put the matter before the Circle afther supper, but I can hould out no hope to you. If you had only minded your own business, maybe 'twould have been better for ye. Howandiver, we will give ye a "Key of Heaven" or a "Garden of the Soul"† to-morrow, so that if you will you may die repentant, although widout a confessor. Good night, sir ; come Phadrig avic."

Alone, our hero had ample time afforded him to meditate the possible result of the deliberations of the Circle concerning himself. That at least Jerry Heffernan was fairly disposed toward him there was no doubt in our hero's mind, but this favourable inclination could hardly be supposed to extend so far as the avowed good intentions of Jerry's father. Youth, however, is sanguine, and Desmond was, for the time, much more anxious to ascertain from the old man the result of his mission to Carrig Desmond than he was troubled concerning the resolution of Mr. Patrick Shine.

Secure in the absolute secrecy and concealment of their

\* This, dear reader, proveth that Mr. Shine, like his compatriots in general, had profited somewhat by the moral code of Roman casuistry, which pays no heed to St. Paul's precept, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour."

† Catholic prayer books inscribed with those titles.

mountain fastness, the moonlighters betook themselves to supper without posting either sentinel or guard. A generous portion of the savoury stew and a bowl of tea were set apart for the prisoner by Con Heffernan, and old Dennis himself undertook to convey the meal. As he placed the dishes on the inverted malt-tub which served as Desmond's table, the old man said:

"Bedad, your honour, I have seen the lady, and I have brought ye her message."

"Her message?" cried Hugh, "where is it? let me have it at once."

"Whisht, your honour! whisht! not quite so loud, and I must hurry or that divil will suspicion me. 'Tell him,' she said,—and bedad! but she's the real lady,—'Tell him, Dennis, that I am happier now nor iver I was, that I knew he was not murdered, that I will be patient till his return.' There, your honour, that's all. Bear up bravely, for Paddy Shine's life will be sacrificed before a hair of your honour's head is hurt."

Thus cheered by his wife's message and reassured by Dennis, our hero bent all his attention on the subject then before him,—that is to say, his supper. Outside, his gaolers and their confederates were engaged in a similar manner, and little was said while the meal was in progress. At its conclusion, however, the plates and bowls were consigned by Con to a tub beside the still, the tin cups in which the tea had been used being suffered to remain on the table, evidently with an ulterior purpose. And now pipes were in demand and tongues were unloosed, and Dennis Heffernan, standing at the head of the board, announced that Captain Moonlight was present, about to hold a solemn council. "Sin fein!" he said in a loud voice, extending his hand to a man even older than himself, who sat at his right hand. "Sin fein!" responded every man simultaneously, while hands were stretched across the table and clasped with fraternal pressure. It was an impressive scene, typical of the worst side of the Irish character, of that illegitimate characteristic fostered and developed by centuries of injustice and race-persecutions. The ruddy light from the furnace danced and flickered across the board, and made the roof-props resemble forest trees or the clustered pillars of some Gothic cathedral, while it multiplied them indefinitely. Apparently the place could boast no other lamp

than that which burned in the inner chamber, for Patrick Shine, whose dislike of darkness was perhaps attributable to his evil conscience, proposed that Jerry should transfer the light from the one room to the other. Dennis having nodded his assent the change was quickly effected, and Jerry, as he placed the lamp on the table, observed to his father: "Bedad, it was no use at all, at all where it was, for sure the young man is fast asleep on the bed." This was, however, quite a mistake on Jerry's part, for at that particular instant our hero was looking through the low passage an interested spectator of the, to him, extraordinary assembly.

"Brothers all," began Heffernan, running his eyes down the board, "you know that we have with us to-night one of our tried and trusted Munster comrades, Morgan Mannion, the *Baccach*, who was a moonlighter before some of yez were born. Before we go any further, I will ask him to sing us one of the ould songs, one of those that were sung in forty-three, when our hands and our hearts were ready, when more than a million of Ireland's bouldest were waiting the Liberator's word to rise and strike one blow. Wirrastrue! brothers, that word was not spoken, for the drop of white blood,—the religious drop it was, sure,—made him a coward at the last, and, begorra! we and the world all stood stupefied when the man who gathered seven hundred thousand men together at Clare on the fifteenth of June, seven hundred and fifty thousand at Tara in August, and half a million of the fighting sons of Wicklow, Carlow, Wexford and all Leinster at Enniscorthy in July, was subdued by a proclamation on the seventh day of October! Brothers, I often wonder how I managed to live through the shame of it, but I did. The men were there, and sure there was no lack of arms,—but when the soul of a warrior was needed, by God! there was only the spirit of a lawyer. Faix! we were and we are a religious people, and when others, like the Frinch and the Amerikins, would be using sword and rifle, we fall on our shin-bones and say the rosary of the Blessed Virgin! Liberty is not for the like of us,—but come, Morgan avic! sing us one of the yvar songs of our fathers."

Thus invited, or rather enjoined, the white-haired *Baccach*, or wandering combination of bard, peddler and beggar, threw back his head, partly shut his eyes, and began to sing,—at first somewhat wailingly, but gradually changing the note to

one of valorous assertion and defiance,—in Irish *The Voice of Tara*. With the exception of the unheeded prisoner within all of Mannion's audience understood the language in which he was singing; but our hero did not, at any rate, fail to notice that the martial sounds seemed to exert a marked influence over the assembled moonlighters. Their eyes sparkled with the light of the old Milesian *rosg-catha* or battle's eye, their nostrils dilated, and they clenched their hands. How potent under the circumstances was this spirit-stirring lament and invocation you may learn, gentle reader, from the following translation of some of the verses :\*

" Oh, that my voice could waken the hearts thatumber cold,  
The chiefs that Time hath taken, the warrior kings of old.  
Oh, for Fion-gal, the pride of all the gallant Fenian crew,  
To wave his brand, the fight demand, and blow the Bar abu.

" Oh, for the Clanna-Morni, the Clanna-Deaghadh tall,  
Dal-Reada's knights of glory, who scal'd the Roman Wall.  
Oh, for the darts that smote the hearts of Freedom's foreign foe,  
When bloodier grew the fierce Creev-Rust o'er bleak Helvetia's  
snow.

" Oh, for the battle axes that smote the pirate Dane ;  
Oh, for the firm Dalcaassians that fought on Ossory's plain.  
And oh, for those who wrathful rose the Saxon to withstand,  
Till traitor arts and recreant hearts betrayed the patriot band.

" Arise ye, now or never ; from heaven the martyred brave  
Command you to deliver the land they fought to save.  
Then swear to die ere despots tie your limbs in thralldom's chain,  
And let the shout ring boldly out o'er list'ning earth and main.

" The fishers of Kilkerran, the men of Greenore Bay ;  
The dwellers by Lough Dergert and by the broad Lough Neagh, -  
Leave boat and oar, and leap ashore to join the fiery ranks  
That come in pride from Galtee's side and from Blackwater's  
banks.

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\* For which the chronicler doth not assume the credit, the rendering being by an unknown hand quite half a century ago. The original, however, is still to be heard in the mountain districts of the south-west, and the chronicler hath heard it chanted in Irish even in the heart of the imperial city the Thames.

† Crobh Ruadh, the standard of the Red Branch order.



"Where stubborn Nuir is streaming, where Lee's green valley  
Where kingly Shannon circles his hundred sainted isles, [smiles,  
They list the call, and woe befall the hapless, doomed array  
That wakes their wrath in war's red path to strike in Freedom's  
fray!"

When Morgan had ended his song and modestly received the thanks and commendation of his companions, the circle was once more called to order for the transaction of business. Our hero now and then heard, or fancied that he heard, the name of Furlong repeated, but as nearly all the speaking was in Irish, Desmond soon lost interest and betook himself to his not very attractive couch, where his mind, alternating between Blanche and a consideration of Heffernan's probable intentions in his favour, continued active for a time and finally yielded itself up to sleep. While he slept as soundly as though in his own bed at the castle, the secret society assembled in the outer chamber was violently agitated on the matter of Furlong's mills. Con Heffernan had placed two large bottles of mountain dew and a jug of spring water on the table, and it must be confessed that if the moonlighters' success in lowering rents were to be estimated by their diligence and ability in lowering the spirit in the bottles the prospects of the landlords would have been cheerless enough. In the especial and particular case of Mr. Pat Shine it was noticeable that his audacity and villainy became more flagrant and glaring with every glass of liquor he swallowed, while his hatred of Dick Furlong and the old miller was apparent to all. With all the rough eloquence he could muster he urged that an example ought to be made in the case of an upstart family like this, and the debate waxed so warm that finally old Dennis declared that if any action were to be taken in the matter he himself would not participate. Shine eagerly availed himself of the opportunity presented in this declaration, and when it was voted that the mills should be fired it was on the distinct understanding that Pat Shine should conduct the expedition.

"I will not, however," said Dennis, "have the boys go shorthanded on my account. Here's Con has been bending over the skillet for a week,—I will take his place for wan night while he follies your orders as captain, Phadrig avic. Ye will remember, boys, that Furlong is just now under protection, and to give the devil his due the district-inspector is nobody's fool."

"Cannot Jerry go down wid us?" inquired Shine. "Sure, his right eye looking along the bar'l of his rifle would be better than all of us widout him."

"And who is to watch the prisoner?" said Dennis, with well-feigned surprise: "sure, he is a young man, supple as a willow and, for all his nateness, tougher nor whipcord. Would ye leave him to an ould fellow like myself, an' that, too, wid the flustheration of cooking to keep me warm?"

"The prisoner!" cried Shine, his evil face darkened by a scowl, and his ferret-like eyes flaming like sparks as their lids suddenly contracted. "The prisoner! well, then, Heffernan, why not settle his matter now in the circle?"

"I am willing," responded Dennis, "to try the man now, ready and willing. But mark my words, all of ye, it shall be a fair trial, we will have no innocent blood on our hands."

"A fair trial—innocent blood!" sneered Shine, "bedad, you are turned sintimintal very suddinly, it seems to me, ould man. Sure, an' it's yourself well knows that I have the soggarth's consint to the act of justice, as he called it."

While Shine was speaking the old moonlighter started up, and as the last words fell from the quondam sailor's lips the black visage almost turned to an ashen colour, for Dennis Heffernan had drawn and levelled a formidable pistol; and the whole cavern fairly rang as he shouted:

"The curse o' Cromwell on the soggarth and on all who are led by him! Is it for you, ye lily-livered spalpeen of hell, to dispute my authority in my own circle? Was I Captain Moonlight years an' years afore the soggarths interfered to blast our work wid their blessin's to be tould now that I must do only as Larry O'Ruarc ordhers me? Have ye not sworn to obey me widout axin' or doubtin', an' do ye now dare to call me sintimintal?"

Not a man stirred during this outburst of their angry chief, but the blanched lips of Shine quivered with terror while he whined out his apology.

"Wisha, Dinnis, man! put up your pistol," he said, "sure, I meant no harm at all, at all, and I ax your pardon. Let the spy have a fair thrial, I am agreeable to that same. Sure, I know ye are captain well enough. As for the soggarth, bedad, 'tis he that provides the manes and who corresponds to headquarters."

"Thru enough," returned Heffernan, apparently mollified,

and returning his pistol to some secret receptacle about his person, "he corresponds wid those who are, I sometimes think, using ourselves as tools to be cast aside whin the work is done. But they may be desaved,—they may all be desaved; but let that be. I want this man fairly tried, because he is not and niver was a landlord, because he proved himself a man when he bate the spawn of the bloody Orangeman. I want him tried because his ould cousin at the castle is Irish to the core and a landlord that niver misused a poor tenant; because we have only your own word for his being a spy; and because his own great-grandfather carried a pike for ould Ireland at Enniscorthy and Vinegar Hill. Boys," he added, waving his sinewy arms across the table,—“sure these reasons are good enough for yez!”

“Thru for you!” said all present, even Shine himself echoing the affirmation, “thru for you, Dinnis, let him have a fair trial.”

“Jerry Heffernan!” cried his father, “bring the prisoner into the circle,” and the obedient custodian of our hero started off toward the inner room. As he drew himself upright upon entering, Hugh Desmond, who had been awakened by the loud and vehement tones of old Dennis, started to his feet.

“Is that you, Jerry?” he asked, as the light was intercepted by his gaoler’s person.

“It is, sir. You are wanted beyant there in the circle. Bedad, sir, you are to be tried before Captain Moonlight, an’ it’s meself wishes ye well out of it, I confess.”

“Go on, Jerry,” said Hugh, “I am willing to face either moonlight or sunlight,” and he followed the man out through the passage.

“Guard the door there,” said Heffernan, as the men advanced toward him; “Con and Jerry, guard the door,” and the ready and cautious seneschals took up a position near the entrance of the cave.

“Stand there, sir,” said Dennis, “or, if ye care to, ye may sit. I have to tell you that you are before the court of Captain Moonlight, as just a court as there is in all Ireland, though you will miss the wigs and gowns which belong to other courts where the poor man’s cause is betrayed and the little he has stolen from him. Do you acknowledge our jurisdiction?—faith, that’s a legal word, I think,” inquired the old man, with a humorous twinkle in his eye.

"At any rate," replied Hugh, "I have no alternative but to acknowledge your power, I suppose. That you are desperate men, pursuing immoral methods, I have no doubt whatever; but you have me in your power. Let me know your accusation, and in self-defence I will endeavour to meet it."

"Very good, we ask no more of you, at least for the present," said Heffernan. "Stand up, Patrick Shine, and accuse this man to his face."

To do the Agitator strict justice, it must be said that he was firmly, thoroughly convinced that Hugh Desmond was a secret agent of Scotland Yard, of the Government, or, as he considered probable, of both. Very briefly, but clearly, he told of his meeting Walsh,—an old American crony,—at Queenstown, of their alarm at the too-evident attentions of a certain questionable farmer, and of his own rapidly executed plan of sending Walsh away to Dublin while he, Shine, undertook to follow the detective. He, however, had lost sight of the officer for a time, and,—actuated probably by his own personal apprehensions,—he determined to go to London himself without previously consulting Walsh. Knowing the metropolis fairly well, he contrived to make his way to Scotland Yard soon after his arrival, and it was while hanging around Whitehall and Parliament Street that he recognized the detective and saw Desmond alight from a cab. Subsequently, as he said, he found the same officer calling at our hero's lodgings, and he was forced to conclude that in some way or other Maurice Desmond's cousin was connected with the secret police.

"That is all I have to say," concluded the Agitator, "and I guess this young *gentleman*,"—oh, how he emphasized the word!—"can explain it all. But let him say what he will, brothers, I would still an' all like to ask you if he does not now know too much for our safety? Faix! brothers, if Thamaus Dhu,\* whose praises this young squireen has been after telling us in a book, were alive in Jigginstown Castle, the ould ruin in County Kildare, he would not be half so dangerous to yez. Save this squireen and ye will all soon be wearing Queen Victoria's uniform."

Of course, Hugh Desmond was able to clear up the apparent

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\* "Black Thomas," the epithet conferred on the great Earl of Strafford by the native Irish, who, like modern Separatists, were skilled in nick-names and vilification.

mystery of his dealings with the detective, and he himself saw, or thought he saw, that his explanation was satisfactory to many of his judges. The final argument of Shine was, however, a potent one,—how could they possibly release one whose knowledge was so likely to prove fatal to themselves? This point was strongly urged, especially by Morgan Mannion, and when the suffrages were taken it proved powerful enough to induce a verdict of guilty by a majority of four out of thirteen. Dennis Heffernan manifested no further opposition; he appeared to acquiesce in the decision as a matter of course.

"Prisoner," he said, "you have been found guilty of plotting against the cause of Ireland and against the lives of those who are suffering in that cause. You will, of course, have to die, but we will deal with you like Christian men. The day after to-morrow this circle will meet again, when lots will be drawn to find the man who will have to shoot you. We will give you a prayer-book,—you must do without a priest, more's the pity alanna!—and your last message will be taken to your wife by a sure hand. Jerry, take him back again, and be sure to guard well the entrance to his room. And now, friends, the council is ended for to-night."

Our hero, while he did not question Heffernan's honesty of intention toward himself, could not avoid speculating on the probable result of any unforeseen accident, to which the old man's mode of living naturally rendered him peculiarly liable. The look of vindictive satisfaction that passed over Shine's countenance when the sentence was given plainly demonstrated that the Agitator felt that his own safety depended on the young man's death, and Desmond knew that his only hope of deliverance rested on the steadiness and uprightness of purpose of a man who was virtually an outlaw, bound by no higher ethical behest of conscience than that deduced by his own cerebration from the primeval *lex talionis*—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

"By St. Brigidh!" said Morgan the Baceach, as the prisoner disappeared with the guard, "but he takes it coolly, Heffernan. Bedad, but I pity him, wid the proud brow and the eagle's eye. But what is a man's life, or the lives of ten thousand men, when the life of a nation may be involved? Hear me, boys and brothers; sure 'tis your own Leinster war-song:

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"Bondsmen, compatriots, scoff of the stranger,  
Grasp the war-torch and the chain-breaking sword;  
Or crouch, like lashed hounds at the foreigner's manger,  
And lick the red scourge of your Sassenagh lord.

"Lo, thy proud chivalry, Leinster, advances,  
Wildly the Rosg-Catha swells from the glen;  
The dance of thy banners, the flash of thy lances,  
Awake Alleluias again and again.

"Light your war-brands at the flame of Kildara;  
The Sunburat has flapped her green wings on the gale;  
Take down the harp from the ruins of Tara,  
And strike forth the march of array'd Innisfaul.

"Sound a loud hymn, for the gathering Nation,  
Surging and murmuring, heaves like the sea.  
Sound, and full soon the glad harp-string's vibration  
Shall chime to the chorus of millions made free."

While singing, the Baccach swayed his body from side to side, while ever and anon he waved his right hand by way of emphasis. Long before his chant was over the majority of the moonlighters had departed to their respective cabins, there to prepare for what was assuredly the most desperate outrage and defiance of law hitherto attempted by them. The Heffernans, Mannion, Shine, and a couple of herds whose patriotic devotion may have been in some measure connected with the wage of one shilling a day paid by Mr. Cator to those who took care of his sheep and cattle, remained in the cave. They sat around the fire many hours, smoking, drinking, singing, and story-telling. By his father's order, Jerry had provided our hero with a small bottle of mountain dew, water, and even sugar, "to aid him in keeping up his spirits, auro."

"Right you are, Dinny," said Shine, with a chuckle; "be-dad, I am after thinking that the last dhrink a man takes should be stronger and better nor any he iver had before."

"Would ye dhrink on the scaffold, ma bouchal?" inquired Mannion.

"Faix," replied Shine, "I would if they would allow me; for I am sure that there is neither atin' nor dhrinkin' in the grave."



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

SHOWING TIM DARRAGH AS LITHOBLETE.

THE sun had passed the meridian more than two hours when Pat Shine and his party,—all armed with guns or rifles, and having their faces and necks blackened,—left the Leaba Righ on their evil mission. Their general rendezvous was somewhere low down in the foot-hills west of Knockmore and not more than four or five miles from the mills. No particular caution was observed in their descent of the mountain,—there was no fear of encountering any of the gentry or the police in that region, and they were well aware that what we may here term the antinomian conscience of any chance peasant or herd they might haply meet would be certain to blind his eyes, deafen his ears, and impose a powerful curb upon his tongue. Morgan Mannion, the Baccach, whose nominal destination was the mountain-glens of Wicklow, had made up his mind to pass at least another day in his present lodgings, not so much for the comfort, perhaps, as because the old man foresaw that the forthcoming attack on the mills would furnish a topic of transcendent interest with which to satisfy the curiosity of the simple folk upon whose assured hospitality he was about to throw himself. Morgan,—with the garrulity of his age and character,—had narrated various reminiscences of the great Anti-Tithe war, when he suddenly made the discovery that his auditors, the two Heffernans, were not altogether so attentive to his narratives as privileged shaughrans and licensed beggars have always required their listeners to be, and his injured self-esteem promptly impelled him to notice the apparent discourtesy.

"But, sure, Dinnis my man, and yourself, Jerry *ma bouchal*, are tired to death wid my prate. Sure, I have outstayed my welkim, I'm thinkin', for who cares for an ould Baccach now-a-days whin the *Nation*, the *Freeman's Journal*, and the *Irish World* can be found in every cabin?"

"Arrah! Mannion," returned Dennis, "I was not wishin' to be disrespectful, and you know that no wan is more welkim than an ould brother-repaler like yourself. But I will not deny that my mind is out wid the boys, and that I am afeared they will not contrhve and scheme as oulder heads would do.

"Twill be next to impossible for them to cross the Coolreagh road before dark by the Holy Well yander, and I forgot to tell Shine not to move down to the Well until the stars were shining. Faix, I would give a crown to have his hearing by me just for a minute."

"Then why not send me down the mountain, father, if the thing is so important?" inquired Jerry. "Sure, an' I always knew that Paddy Shine was not the man to lead the boys on such work."

"But the prisoner, *ma lanuv*, the young gentleman there?" said Dennis, "who knows that he might not——"

"An' if he did," returned Jerry, "if he tried to run, what would be the good of it? Sure you are stronger nor three of him, and well-purvided wid arms in the bargain. Besides, how is he to know that I am not here, or that the rest of the boys are not at hand?"

"Begorra! and that is thrue enough," said Morgan. "Sure, Dinnis, if you can spare the boy let him go, or trouble may come of it."

For a short time the old moonlighter appeared to hang doubtfully over the problem, but at last he said:

"Well, Jerry boy, I think you had better say to them, maybe, for it's anxious I am, an' ther's no denyin' it. Be sure to warn them not to cross over to the Well before night-fall, and to be as careful as they can be to avoid fighting the police."

In about five minutes, the envoy had made his face resemble that of a Christy minstrel or an Othello of fifty years ago, and with an interchange of blessings in Irish he took his departure from the cave. He had been gone about half-an-hour when Dennis produced a bottle of whiskey, cups, and tobacco, with the remark:

"Arrah, Morgan avic, it's not often that two ould stagers like ourselves foregather, so let us be companionable if we can. There!"—and he filled the old man's cup with liquor,—"toss off that widout winkin', as ye could do in the ould days."

Nothing loth, the wanderer obeyed the injunction to the letter, his example being followed by Heffernan, and then their pipes were filled, and they began to smoke vigorously. After a time Mannion took up the thread of his interrupted reminiscence, while Dennis manifested the closest interest in

the proxy relation, taking the opportunity presented by every cessation to replenish the cup of the bibulous veteran.

They had been thus engaged about an hour, when Heffernan said :

"Morgan avic, I am after going to look inside there, just to see how our bird is doing in his cage. Make yourself aisy a while,—maybe you will freshen up the fire a bit, for the air up here is keen to our ould bodies,—and then we will go on wid the talk of ould times."

In the absence of his crony, Morgan threw some billets and one or two small logs on the fire, walking to and fro with rather unsteady gait,—attributable unquestionably to the quantity of poteen he had already taken. With the characteristic cunning of the inebriate, he had,—when assured that his entertainer had fairly disappeared within the low passage,—hurriedly filled his almost empty pannikin with raw whiskey which he drank off as easily as though it were milk.

"Ah ! sir," whispered Heffernan to our hero, "I can see by the light in your eyes that you are like a hunter before the steeplechase. Well, your honour, I shall be after going down to the spring for water in a few minutes. You must throw this blanket over his head and tie the ends ; sure he is more nor half drunk already. Here ; tear the blanket almost into halves, so that ye can tie it about the ould fellow's neck. Follow any sign of a track ye can see, like the Injians the boys from America lie about so much. About sunset you will be able to see Knockmore Crag, but as you value your life and all you love do not try to reach Burke's, for the boys are in hidin' in that quarter. You must find your way to Carrig Desmond by the east. It will be a rough journey for ye, but it will be safe. And now, your honour, I have kept my word to you, I think. Be sure to keep the sun to the right of yez in going down."

"Before you go, Dennis," said Desmond, "give me your hand. There ! Good bye, my friend. Remember that I shall always be willing to acknowledge the debt I owe you, and that if you are inclined to forsake this evil life I can show you the way and make it easy for you."

"Good bye, sir !" returned the old man, "sure, I thank you. But I hate this Saxon Landlordism bitterer nor hell, as every Irishman ought to do ; and I shall probably die fighting it. My humble service to your lovely lady : may she never know

another sorrowful minute!" Saying this, the moonlighter wrung Hugh's hand once more, and stooping his tall form he left the chamber.

"Bedad! Morgan avic," he said to the old gaberlunzie, whom he found nodding pipe in mouth before the fire, "'tis better here nor where the youngster is. 'Tis not so cold in there at all, at all, but it bates all for the murk and reek of it. But Morgan avic, sure we must be after filling the kittle: do ye know where the spring is beyant there?"

"Troth, Dinnis *ma bouchal*, I do not," replied the other, "or I would be after doing your pleasure. But sure you can go fill it yourself in no time."

"To be sure I will," returned Dennis, "but first I must have a drop o' the cratur just to keep the fog out of my throat," and he forthwith helped himself to a moderate dose of the ardent liquor. "Faix," he continued, "this is the right stuff now, the mountaineer's physio; and divil burn me but I prefer it to all the docthor's drugs between Dublin and Cork. Help yourself, Morgan, while I go down to the spring, but keep your eyes open. I will leave my pistol wid ye, on the stool here; but ye need not fear, for sure I left the prisoner asleep and snoring."

"And how far is it to the spring, Dinnis avic?" inquired the old man, his articulation being somewhat thick.

"Sure, an' it's not a minute from here," replied Dennis, "at least, to a young man like Con; but my bones are stiffer nor they once were, avic. But I will not be more than five minutes, anyway," and, bucket in hand, the moonlighter left the cave. He must have been absent more, much more than five minutes, because at least that portion of time was occupied by Morgan Mannion in refilling and lighting his dudheen, helping himself to the whiskey by the simple process of applying the bottle to his mouth and gradually elevating the lower end, and in once more nodding off to sleep before the fire. How many minutes actually elapsed ere this last predicament was realized this chronicle sayeth not. Morgan's awakening was attended with strong symptoms of strangulation. Having with commendable accuracy of detail stolen behind his custodian and enshrouded his head in the blanket, Hugh Desmond proceeded to twine and twist the rough strips like surgical bandages around his neck. In fulfilling this part of his painful duty, our hero afforded a brilliant and most con-

clusive illustration of what Mr. Galton and the Hereditists would doubtless term inherited aptitude, for the knots in the bandages could scarcely have been more deftly tied had the operator been Hugh's father or a Spiritualist medium in his cabinet. This task performed, Hugh,—mindful of the somewhat arduous journey before him,—thrust the whiskey bottle, now much depleted, as far as possible into the pocket of the well-worn jacket which Jerry Heffernan had given him, and made his way into the air and light of freedom. Oh! how delightful, how transporting was the change from the miserable den, reeking with foul air and sepulchral dankness, to the bright, crisp atmosphere of the mountains. Throwing his arms aloft, our hero filled his lungs with the ozone-laden air, and then, carefully turning his right cheek to the sun, he took his way down the scarcely discernible trail.

"Holy Moses! why, what the devil has come to ye, Morgan Mannion?" shouted Dennis Heffernan on returning to Leaba Righ. "By God! the man is choking, so he is. Wirrastrue! I can niver loosen these knots, I think. Hould aisy a moment, avic, and I'll be after relieving you. There! now ye can breathe a bit, maybe; but, Morgan, tell me, man, has that divil of a Desmond given ye the slip? Tell me, ye Baccach! has he gone?"

The question may have been imperative, but it was obvious that no answer could be returned until the half-stupefied old fellow was unbound. Hugh Desmond had while binding him thrown Mannion to the ground and knelt upon the prostrate form, and Heffernan did not even attempt to raise him until the last knot was loosed and the blanket removed.

"Now, you omadhaun!" he shouted, "tell me all about it; but hould on a bit, let me see what has happened," and seizing his pistol he ran into the other chamber. He came out again in a few moments, the very image of anger and dismay. "Morgan Mannion," he said, as he stood before his companion, "I was a damned ould *gooscheen* and a fool to trust ye, though only for a minute. Bedad, you must have fallen asleep the instant I left ye. O Morgan! Morgan! what have ye to say to this? What, can ye say, man, to the boys to-night? What will they say of ye now up in the mountains

where ye are going! Faix, Morgan, the harpers there, if there are any left, will break the strings of the *clarsach* when they tell of how the Baccach was outwitted while sleeping. Oohone! ould man, why did I trust ye!"

During this apostrophe the poor old gaberlunzie stood with clasped hands, the picture of contrition and shame.

"Dinnis, man," he said at last, "sure it must have been the tobacco. I felt a wakeness come over me, and I remember no more until I woke up wid the chokin'. Wirrastrue! that I should live to see this day! Oohone, oohone! but, Dinnis, urre, there is yet time for us to escape, and sure we can find safe hiding away there where the big top of Lignaquilla sweeps the sky."

"And would yez have me desert the boys like a coward and traitor, Morgan? Bedad, I do not think this young Desmond is a spy, for it's well enough he explained his falling in wid the Sassenagh *lorgaire*\*, but all the same this means no more moonlighting for many a day between the Barrow and the Slaney. But why do I be talking, when maybe I may be after catching the man if I hurry after him? Keep the fire burning, Morgan, and yourself awake, man, till I come back," and the moonlighter hastened off with well-feigned eagerness and zeal.

It was sunset when our hero found himself in sight of the Knockmore Crags and the Plantation. There was yet a considerable distance between him and Carrig Desmond, and he was weary and overwrought. Prudence, however, warned him not to incur the risk of discovery which would attend the resolve to choose the shorter course to Knockmore and thence in Mr. Burke's carriage to his own home. There was nothing for it but to descend into the glen and, by keeping to the east until he reached the river, follow its banks until the old castle became visible, although this would necessarily defer his meeting with his wife until a comparatively late hour of the night. Before turning toward the eastern slope Hugh sat down on a large stone and watched with admiration the marvellous kaleidoscopic colour-changes which followed after the

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\* Detective or spy.



descent of the sun behind the mountains. The brush of a Claude or a Turner,—aye, even the mantipolic pen of the son of Buzi, of him who, dwelling among the captives by the river of Chebar, endeavoured by comparisons drawn from such colour-abundances as the rainbow, fire-tinged amber, and the heavenly sapphire, to describe the “likeness of the glory of the Lord,”—would prove of no avail to depict or represent the splendour of that western sky, alternating and quivering with the emotions engendered by the parting kiss of the Sun-god. Nowhere save in woman, adorned with nought beyond her native beauty, is the adorable loveliness of the Universal God,—of whom the cosmos partly envisaged by men is but one infinite attribute,—so clearly manifest as in such a sunset. So evanescent is this sublimely magnificent phase of nature—nature that the mysterious mirror in which the glorious image is reflected cannot adequately reproduce it as a thought by the most subtle ideation. Even as he looked, Hugh saw the cerulean profundities change until the azure inlets grew ashen grey and the golden cloud-mammæ became bosses of dull-red fire. The glory had departed, and springing to his feet our hero started downward on his way toward the river.

So long as the twilight lasted Desmond got on well enough, but as the evening grew darker a light rain began, which ere long developed into a regular drizzle. Nevertheless our hero struggled onward for hours, endeavouring always to keep the light breeze on his right side; it was slow work, however, and the best-trained pedestrian could have made but little progress under the circumstances. Just as the drizzle was converted into a furious downpour, Hugh stumbled up against a sort of rough wall, belonging to an outhouse or deserted cabin, and groping his way to the doorless entrance and extending his arms he made the satisfactory discovery that the place was a sort of storehouse for hay and straw. Having divested himself of the now soaked and dripping jacket, the thoroughly fatigued young man threw himself down on a heap of hay, and determined to go no farther until rest and a change of weather should make it easier for him to proceed. Ere long, yielding to the demands of nature, he fell asleep, but his slumber must have been of that character which is popularly associated with lack of substance in the victualling department, for when he awoke it was still very dark. Going to the entrance of the hut, Desmond found that the weather had so

far improved that only a light watery vapour or mist was prevalent. He was about to resume his couch of hay when his attention was attracted to a glare of dull red light which suddenly shot upward and which was, he felt confident, caused by a conflagration in or near Inniscarra. His mind flew back to the place of his captivity, and his scant acquaintance with the projects of Mr. Shine induced him to infer that the moonlighters were perpetrating some outrage at the mills or the house of the Furlongs. For some time Hugh remained watching this lurid light, but when the rain again began to fall in a steady shower, the young man,—who was chilled to the marrow,—retired within the hut, resolved to await with patience the return of daylight. He wisely buried himself to the neck in the fragrant grass, and in that situation went off to sleep once more. Leaving him there for the time, I will ask of thee, gentle reader, to consider as briefly as possible the less innocent manner in which Patrick Shine and his misguided followers spent a portion of that night.

Having been duly joined at the rendezvous by Jerry Hefernan and heard his communication, Shine proceeded to divide the party, giving half the command to Jerry, whose objective point was the flour mill, while he himself resolved at all hazards to burn the fine new house in which the Furlongs resided. That this plan,—especially his own part in it,—carried greater risk in it he was well aware, but for some years this evil-minded fellow had entertained bitter feelings toward the old miller because the latter had steadily refused to advance a couple of hundred pounds, or even to become surety for that amount, when Shine had set his heart upon extending his grocery into a regular drinking saloon according to the American fashion. The character of the night exactly suited men bent on such an enterprise, and they were enabled to enter the narrow lane and pass the Craggs at least an hour earlier than they would have done had the weather been clear. Arrived at the Holy Well they secreted themselves until the mounted patrol rode by, and soon after both parties,—each consisting of ten men,—crossed the Coolreagh road and took their way across the fields toward the mills.

It had been arranged that the attacks should be nearly simultaneous, the signal to be the display of a light near the mill-race which flowed between the house and the mills. The cottages of Mr. Furlong's hands stood a few hundred yards

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behind the latter, and higher up the race and almost directly opposite the house was a tall tiled granary well stored with grain. The mills also were very extensive, the larger of the two being surrounded with tall trees. The water from the race was conveyed by a trough supported on trestles, and, by an ingenious arrangement, it was divided again in such a manner that the two huge bucket-wheels were moved by powers nearly equal, the waters re-uniting and flowing through a cutting across which a small stone bridge carried the road to the main entrance of the mills.

Jerry Heffernan continued to lead his party across this bridge undiscovered. He had barely effected this, however, when a swinging window or lattice immediately over the big wheel was thrown open and a lantern was thrust out. The moonlighters were all concealed in the shadow of the trees, and Jerry observed with satisfaction that the lantern was held by the ordinary watchman, so that probably there were no policemen about the place. He waited for a few seconds until the window was closed, and then he himself ran behind the mills up by the granary. Having reached the race, he drew some well-oiled newspapers from his pocket, struck a match, watched the flare rise, and then ran back to his own station. He had just returned to his men when a door in the lean-to entrance not more than ten yards away was half opened, and a strong, buxom woman appeared, also holding a lantern. At that moment a small, wiry-haired terrier rushed out, crossed the road, and began to bark furiously. The moment had come, and Jerry with a wild yell cried—

“Now boys, *fagh a bealach!* to the door, to the door!”

As they ran forward a gun was fired right in their faces, the whole charge of small-shot whizzing by Jerry's head, while the momentary pause gave the defenders time to shut and bolt the door. At that same instant a whole volley was heard from across the race, and this was immediately followed by two precise discharges of a similar nature.

“By God!” shouted Jerry, “the bloody peelers are up there at all evints. Break in the door, or it will be too late!”

Like one man, the misguided moonlighters, with all their national impetuosity, rushed onward, and the frail door with its bolt and staples was hurled in like a broken packing-case. The lawless ruffians, now thoroughly warmed to their work, sprang into the mill. Half-way up the passage, between the

machinery, stood the night-watchman with his gun at the shoulder, while somewhat in his rear his daughter, with long, dishevelled hair floating around her neck, was holding up the lantern. The brave fellow pulled the trigger, and one of the Cator herdsmen, who was standing near Jerry, fell shot through the heart. In return the moonlighters sent a full volley through the building, a piercing shriek was heard, and the lantern fell to the ground. It did not take Jerry and his companions a minute to remove the dead man and to secure the watchman and the girl, both of whom were bleeding.

"Take them outside, boys, and let them go, if they can walk. Hark! sure, they are having a brisk fight up at the house. We must fire the mill and join the others. As for Jim Dwyer, he is dead, so ye need bother no more about him. God rest his soul! and now for the fire, boys."

Some time was spent in preparing and igniting the fire, and not until this had been done did Jerry withdraw any of his men from the mill.

"Come on, boys!" he shouted, "yez need not fear meeting any of the Royals. Sure, while they can fight behind stone walls them's the boys that will not risk catching cold by fighting in the open air."

That this opinion, derogatory of the bravest and best disciplined military force in the world, in whom the old Irish warrior-virtues shine with heightened lustre, was founded rather on prejudice than on sound judgment was made sufficiently evident a minute or two later when the moonlighters reached the open space between the burning mill and its sister building. The rising flames were just beginning to gleam through the windows, so that the moving shadows were barely visible. The miscreants were within a few yards of the second mill when a trumpet-like voice cried "Charge!" and a compact body of policemen, headed by Inspector Tyacke, came down on the moonlighters, who, taken wholly by surprise, scattered and ran each one for himself. There was no fighting, not a gun was fired, and not a prisoner was taken. Except that one of the buildings had been set on fire, the moonlighters' expedition was a complete failure, Paddy Shine and his party having melted away as soon as they discovered that the police were in force around the house. Of course Mr. Tyacke, having routed the other division, took measures to scour all the roads, although he probably recognized that pur-

suit on such a night would be bootless. Just as the fire broke through the roof of the mill, the rain re-commenced, and shortly after it came pouring in torrents, very much to the satisfaction of the mill-hands who, under the guidance of Dick Furlong, were engaged in subduing the flames. The body of Jim Dwyer was removed to a shed, and Brophy and his daughter,—each with a broken arm,—were sent to Inniscarra in a jaunting-car escorted by mounted policemen.

The reluctant winter sun had crept a few degrees above the horizon when Tim Darragh, sitting on a sack placed saddle-like on the administrator's mare, rode leisurely enough along the "Inches," or meadows bordering the river. At the other extremity of this particular field was an old ruin, having two high jagged corners at the end facing the river. The place was so ancient that,—strange indeed in Ireland,—it had outlived both tradition and legend. Nothing was known of its origin or history, nothing was said of it except that the marvellous tenacity of the ruined walls was popularly attributed to a fancy on the part of the architect or builder to mix his mortar with bulls' blood. Inside this old ruin a more modern genius had erected parallel walls of less elaborated masonry, using the ancient structure as ends or gables, and making a sound weather-proof roof, and the place was, together with the meadow, rented from the Earl of Sherbrooke by no less a person than his reverence Father Tom Cahill. In the interests of the wilful Molly, Tim was bent on drawing a cart-load of hay back to the stable at the presbytery; and the fact that the schoolmaster's house was on the road between the Inches and the town may have had some effect in sending honest Tim out so early; for it was not at all improbable that on his return he might succeed in attracting the notice of the winsome Katie Conroy and, as sometimes happened on such occasions, in being invited to warm himself beside the kitchen fire.

Having traversed a slight undulation covered with rich grass and shaded by one or two ash trees of majestic growth, Darragh came to a small slip in the bank which ended in a little pebbly beach, evidently well known to Molly as a convenient place for drinking. The water was very shallow, so that Tim, whose thoughts were probably on the way to Katie, allowed the mare to wade down right under one of the over-



hanging trees. Across the river, about fifteen yards off, four or five protesting ducks broke the silence, and a man, startled by the quacking, sprang up from the long grass, uttered a loud oath, and hurried off in the direction of the old ruin. For a moment our friend Tim looked astonished, as indeed he well might under the circumstances.

"By the arm of the O'Briens!" he ejaculated, "he has his face black. Holy Moses! sure 'tis wan o' the boys from the fight over at Furlong's. Bedad, an' it's none o' my business: whisht, Molly agra, we will give the poor divil time to hide himself, sure."

In the meantime the runaway, as he drew near the barn, was in his turn surprised at the apparition of a man stepping out from the rough wall in the direction of the river.

"Hugh Desmond, by hell!" he shouted, "and a free man. So this is why ould Dinnis would not go wid us. Stop!"—he cried in a voice hoarse with passion—"stop! by God you shall not go free!"

As our hero turned toward this man his features were recognized by Tim Darragh, who, hearing the hoarse challenge, had forced Molly up the beach within easy view of the barn. The honest fellow gave a shout of joyful recognition which ended in a howl of terror, for at that instant the man with the darkened face raised a pistol and shot twice in the direction of Hugh Desmond, who fell to the ground at the second discharge of the weapon.

"You bloody murderer!" cried Tim, who, jumping from the horse, had armed himself, David-like, with a pebble, "you bloody murderer, what have you done?"

The man thus addressed instantly turned his attention to the new-comer. Once again the weapon was levelled,—this time at Darragh,—but when the trigger was pulled no explosion ensued. The last cartridge in the chambers had been emptied, and the man, with a curse, took another pistol from his pocket. Before, however, he could cock the weapon, Tim Darragh hurled the heavy stone straight at the fellow's head. It struck him on the temple, with a dull, sickening thud, and the man fell forward on his face. For a moment or two Tim seemed unable to move a limb, but stepping forward he was just in time to assist our hero in rising.

"Tim," said Hugh, "you came on the scene just in time to save my life. He has hit me in the left shoulder: I do not



think it is serious. First let us look to this man, whom you have badly stunned, I think."

Going forward, they secured the pistols, and then Tim Darragh, taking the prostrate form by the shoulder, gently and respectfully turned it on its back. As he did so, Hugh Desmond and Tim himself uttered an involuntary ejaculation, for there in the awful stillness of death, with a frozen frown on the stained and disfigured countenance, both men recognized Patrick Shine of Inniscarra.

"'Twas his life or mine, your honour," said Tim, apologetically, "and bedad, for that matter, your honour's to boot. Faix, I never killed a man before, and never hope to kill another; but it's meself do not see how this could have been helped."

"You have done nobly, Tim," said our hero, "you have done your duty. I cannot now properly thank you, Tim, for I am strangely weak, but you have done gallantly. And now Tim, you must ride to Inniscarra on the gallop, and tell your story at the station. Bring Dr. Lysaght with you, for my shoulder must be seen to at once."

Tim cast an eye in the direction of a cart which stood near, and said—

"But the corruspe, Mr. Desmond? sure, had I not——"

"By no means," said Hugh, "let Tyacke see it where it lies. I will guard it until you return."

Never before, I wot, had Molly been so impetuously driven as when Tim rode to the village, stopping not even for a look toward the door of the schoolmaster's pretty cottage. Darragh rode like a whirlwind right up to the station, where the officer on duty at once heard his story and undertook to summon the already sufficiently-tired district-inspector. Mr. Tyacke, with great forethought, sent a mounted messenger to Carrig Desmond, so that just as Dr. Lysaght had, after extracting the bullet, bandaged Hugh's shoulder, our hero was clasped in the arms of his wife; and while lingering in that embrace scarcely noticed the extravagant and joyful gestures of the Squire, the administrator, and Lieutenant Wallace. Needless to say that Tim Darragh was the hero of the hour, and that among all the hands extended to him in hearty congratulation the soft little palm of the schoolmaster's daughter lingered in the honest man's grasp the longest and was the most warmly pressed.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## SHOWING SOME OLD FACES UNDER NEW LIGHTS.

**H**UGH Desmond's re-appearance, after having been many days given up for dead, was naturally a nine-days' wonder, second only in interest to the daring audacity of the attack on the flour mills. The magisterial investigation which followed the latter was held at Carrig Desmond, and our hero was, of course, compelled to appear and give evidence of the principal events which had befallen him since the night of the attempted outrage at Knockmore. With characteristic impetuosity, the Hon. Ulick Burke insisted that the police should discover the mysterious cave in the mountains,—no easy task in the face of Hugh's absolute refusal to act as a guide. At that season of the year it was not, however, very difficult to follow anything that looked like a trail; and being assured that such a place as the cavern did really exist, the constabulary exerted themselves to such purpose that on the second day of their exploration a sergeant and half-a-dozen men stood inside the King's Bed. They had found the nest, indeed, but the birds had migrated,—three of them, sooth to say, being at that very moment half-way across the Atlantic Ocean, the flight of the parent being perhaps expedited by the assurance that for one whose life-mission lay in combatting Landlordism the United States of America presented an extensive field of operation. So carefully had this matter been arranged,—Tim Darragh's services as ambassador having been secured at the suggestion of Lady Blanche,—that Lieutenant Wallace was wishing Dennis Heffernan and his sons a good voyage on board of the liner in Cork harbour at the time when a printed proclamation was being posted up on the dead walls and boardings of Ioniscarra and Coolreagh, offering a reward of fifty pounds for the arrest of the moonlighter and his sons. Having fulfilled his pledge to Lady Blanche that he would see the men safe out of Ireland, the lieutenant re-joined his wife and daughter in the city, and within a few hours the three had embarked in the good ship *Upupa* for Plymouth on their way home to Tormavy. Before leaving the castle, Mrs. Wallace had exacted a promise that our hero, his wife and cousin would spend a part of the spring in Devonshire, a

pledge given all the more readily because late events had made considerable inroads on the health of Lady Blanche and her husband.

Out of gratitude to Darragh, the Squire had made him a handsome offer,—namely, that of stocking for him the Banna Farm of ninety acres at a merely nominal rental for the first three years. Tim, however, had certain notions of his own on agriculture in general, especially holding that an unmarried man ought not to undertake the cultivation of anything more extensive than a kitchen garden. While disanting on this one evening at the schoolmaster's, Darragh said :

"Bedad, Mr. Conroy, it would be well enough for a man wid maybe two or three big gossoms of his own to undertake, but sure wan man alone could do little wid the place. And, to tell the whole truth of the matter, I have an inclination to see a bit o' the world outside o' Carlow before I take root like a turnip in the soil. Now, if the Young Master wanted an attindint,—what they call a valley, I think, Mr. Johnston,"—this to the Anglican clergyman's man whose attentions to the fair Katie were as assiduous, if not quite so ardent, as those of Tim himself,—“why, thin, sure that's just the place that would be after suiting me to a t.”

“Ah, then, Mr. Darragh,” replied Johnston, with a provoking air at once supercilious and patronizing, “sure, it's yerself that would niver do for a valley at all, at all, I'm thinkin'.”

“An' why the divil not, thin, savin' yer prisince?” inquired Tim, whose jealous dislike of his affected rival would have eagerly availed itself of some colourable justification of assault and battery.

“Sure, Mr. Darragh, I mean no offence, but I put it to Mr. Conroy here, and to yerself, Miss Katie,—sure ye know well enough that a valley must have experience.”

“To a certain extent, no doubt that is true, Mr. Johnston,” said Conroy, willing to be conciliatory. As a co-religionist his sympathies were with the rector's servitor, but of late the administrator's man had made powerful friends, the consequence being seen in the studied impartiality of the schoolmaster's demeanour.

“But,” interposed Katie, with a blush, “sure, valleys are not always found ready-made, Mr. Johnston ; I suppose they have to begin some time or another,”

Tim's eyes plainly showed his gratitude for this timely rescue, but Mr. Johnston was not to be vanquished quite so easily.

"Sure," he said, "an' it's well known that they have to begin as pages. I mind me that when we wor in Dublin I drove the rector to a garden party at Lord Clontarf's, and there I saw some little gossoons with rows of buttons up and down their jackets. Sure, they were all pages, having nothing to do but to carry in letters and cards to the mistress. When they grow old enough to butter their lips and scrape away the down with a razor or keen-edged penknife, why, then, bedad, they make valleys of them. Now, my friend Mr. Darragh here has a beard that would frighten the Danes."

"*Nabocklish!*" observed Tim, stroking his chin with his huge hand, "that may be so; but sure if the Young Master will take me as his servant divil the bit will I care what he calls me."

When, therefore, Father Tom,—desirous of advancing the interests of his faithful groom,—alluded to the Squire's proposal, he was considerably astonished when Tim, after thanking his reverence, came to give his reasons for refusing the favour.

"Bedad, Father Tom," he said, "because I have driven Molly so many years is no reason why I should be able to do anything wid the farm. But, your reverence, sure I have been thinking that travelling would suit me to a hair, and as young Mr. Desmond has no servant,—nor the Squire ayther, for that matther, except ould Dan,—maybe they would give me a thrial if your reverence would be after sp'akin' a good word for me."

"Well, Tim, my boy," replied the good priest, "I am anxious that you should have a good start in life, so I will see what I can do over at the castle to-morrow. You are now too old to be working for the small pay I can give you, and I hope your brother who is to succeed you will turn out as good a man as yourself. Yes, I will speak for you, Tim, with much pleasure."

The good word was, therefore, duly spoken, and to such good purpose that Tim was the next week duly installed as special body-servant to our hero, and, despite a little awkwardness at the first, his splendid proportions were seen for the first time to full advantage in the quiet suit of chocolate; with

its bronze buttons ornamented with the Diamond crest. Long before his master had quite recovered from the effects of the pistol shot, Tim had more than justified the appointment by his usefulness and readiness to oblige, so that even old Dan and Mrs. Condon,—who were slow to accord him a full welcome,—were at last entirely won over, and acknowledged that the Squire and the Young Master and mistress could not possibly do without the “boy.”

The visit to Tormavy was made about the middle of May. Quite a sensation was caused in Torweston when the party from Tormavy, in two hired carriages, drove through the crooked little streets to the Fountain Inn, and surely never did triumphant warrior experience the emotions which thrilled the bosom of Lieutenant Wallace on this occasion. The weather was delightful, and Mr. Wallace was only too eager to obey Lady Blanche when she insisted that he should conduct them to the very house wherein our hero had, not so long ago, taught the school which bigotry so early brought to confusion. At the reading-room the Squire left a substantial donation toward the library, and Mr. Calton was polite enough to say, while inscribing their names as honorary members, that in certain bound volumes of magazines on the shelves many of Mr. Desmond's articles were to be found, while the monograph on the Earl of Strafford was given quite a conspicuous place. Then followed a most agreeable sail across the bay and around the White Rock, under the pilotage of the venerable Mr. Dunn, who was candid enough to inform our hero that he almost preferred that he should be a Free Thinker rather than a Romanist, “although,” added the veteran, “I never expected to live to see the time when Unbelief would be so openly professed as it is now. Perhaps, however,”—continued he in his stuttering way,—“I shall live to see the end of all, no-ow that the gr-great falling away is taking place u-under my eyes. Ye-es, I think I shall see the end of the world.”

“At all events, Mr. Dunn,” replied our hero, “if you do, I am sure it will find you doing your duty, as you have always seen it, straight before you. For my part, I am convinced that the present thought-turmoil which affects us all, more or less, is the natural preliminary and preparative to the great social revolution before us. We need no angel clothed in white linen to warn us that ‘the time is at hand.’ But others



before us have been similarly affected, and depend upon it that we incur no responsibility if we modestly, reverently obey the dictates of our conscience. 'In all things charity,'—there can be, there is no better maxim, my friend."

"Yes, sir," said the pilot, "I know you are right enough there, but there have been great changes in my time. Yes, sir, right along this coast, where my own father heard John Wesley and saw him pelted with stones, fish-heads and rotten eggs; where Bible Christianity once flourished like a green bay-tree, nothing now flourishes but Infidelity and the Church of England. Here is Blakiston, our vicar, with his choir all toggled out with surplices, and the people having their children baptized and confirmed, while the Eclectics have regular meetings indoors and outdoors. But here is the White Rock, where we catch the finest mackerel in the world with hook and line, ma'am," he said, looking toward Blanche.

The hook and line having been duly produced, Lady Blanche had the pleasure of hauling in a particularly fine specimen of the far-famed White Rock mackerel. There was but little time for fishing, however, and the sun was setting just as the boat re-entered Torweston harbour.

In the course of the week, Maurice Desmond discovered that The Cot, the usual residence of the Wesleyan minister, was to be let for the insignificant sum of twelve pounds per annum. Like most of those whose lives have been mainly passed inland, cousin Maurice was infatuated with the sea, and he had fallen deeply in love with the lovely bays of southern Devonshire. When, therefore, the Squire announced one morning at breakfast that he had taken The Cot for two years and that Mrs. Wallace had been his co-conspirator in giving the necessary orders for its furnishing, the good old gentleman was not quite sure that the announcement would be received with pleasure. He was naturally gratified, then, when Blanche showed her satisfaction by giving him a hearty kiss, while our hero shook his cousin's hand by way of expressing his own feelings on the subject. Nothing could have suited the Lieutenant better than this arrangement, as he foresaw that our hero's devotion to literature would necessarily throw the Squire into almost daily intercourse with himself. Consequently it was not long before the Lieutenant was able to announce that he had commissioned his lugger, the *Lily*, the crew consisting of himself and Jack Clymo, and that, captain, and all



were to be regarded as always subject to the orders of the household at the Cot.

Without question the next two years were the happiest of the old Squire's existence. In October, 1875, he and his cousin returned to Carrig Desmond, but at Christmas our hero was summoned to Devonshire by the advent of a little counterpart of himself as he appeared to the reader in the second chapter of this history. The spring of 1876 was well advanced before the Squire was able to leave Ireland,—he had, as he said, been putting his affairs in order,—and the naming of the child was deferred until his arrival. After due consideration had been given to the matter,—the Squire being as great a stickler for names as was Mr. Shandy,—it was unanimously voted that the young despot should be called Owen Lambert, a decision with which cousin Maurice and the Lieutenant were equally gratified.

Occupying so prominent a position in the little community, the Desmonds soon found that their habits were closely scrutinized. A visit of curiosity to the old parish church one Sunday was soon after followed by a call on the part of Mr. Blackiston, whose somewhat tedious recital of his plans and wishes with regard to church-restoration was courteously listened to, although when the financial side of the matter was alluded to cousin Maurice rather significantly expressed his opinion to the effect that there ought to be no difficulty there, considering that the neighbouring landowner and his ancestors had for so many generations drawn the great tithes of the parish. On the other hand, Dr. Hanaford and the Eclectics were not remiss in bringing before the residents at the Cot the claims of the young society as a centre of liberty and light. Once or twice our hero lectured at this institution, while Lady Blanche,—divining the immediate requirements of the society,—presented a pianoforte at which on many occasions she herself presided. Hugh, however, had undertaken a somewhat ambitious treatise, so that he had but little leisure, consenting at times with some reluctance to accompany the Squire and the Lieutenant in their excursions on the water. Whenever he turned aside to observe the doings of the little world around him, he was forcibly impressed with the great change so feelingly lamented by the pilot. The old ascendancy and pride of place of the Dissenters had almost wholly vanished, while the ethical consequences were discrepant in their char-

acter. For example, "the wedding baked meats" did not now so often "furnish forth the christening tables" as they once did,—the inference being that both Secularism and Ecclesiasticism were more conducive to chastity than Protestant Nonconforming Christianity. This improvement, however, was counterbalanced, to say the least, by an increased consumption of intoxicating liquors, and it was to be feared that Mr. Dunn was not without justification when he asserted in his orations that even the mothers of Torweston had begun to show signs of being affected by the growing vice.

Most significant, however, was the anæmic condition of the Independents. The *Zeitgeist* had so far succeeded even in this community that Calvinism with its pitilessly logical doctrines was represented only by Mr. Calfton, Captain Topp and a small but highly respectable remnant. The new hall of the Eclectics, with its Lombard tower or campanile, stood directly opposite the Independent chapel, so that it was on Sundays quite easy for a saunterer through those narrow streets to stand midway between these edifices and take in grace and justification by faith through one ear, and evolution, relativity, and the higher criticism through the other. Satisfied with the progress the Church was making, Mr. Blakiston, —though a combative man,—did not openly oppose the Eclectics, reserving his abilities in that direction for the annual church congresses, where, being unopposed, he was wont to prove a veritable *malleus hæreticorum*. An attempt had been made to arouse vulgar theological prejudice against Dr. Hanaford, and a certain young medico, a member of the Guild of St. Luke, had been encouraged to settle in the town. The long-established repute of Kekewich and his son-in-law, however, was not to be thus easily overturned, and the aspiring young guildsman,—finding that prescribing for orthodox paupers did not liquidate butchers' bills,—very soon retired from the struggle in disgust.

Between the vicar and Dr. Hanaford, when they met in public, a continuous feud prevailed. The doctor, like so many of his profession, was an avowed materialist,—a sort of Free-thinker at once the most difficult to contend with and the least impatient of contradiction. During one of their frequent discussions, Mr. Blakiston had cited the case of a certain old woman,—a recipient of outdoor relief,—who was, he said, a living demonstration of the superiority of faith as a solace and

support in life and a strengthener and consolator in the face of approaching death. Soon after the doctor and the secretary of the Eclectics paid a visit to this old lady, and having conciliated her with the gift of half-a-crown and a pound of tea, they proceeded to ascertain the amount of her theological knowledge. Questioned especially on the creed, Ruth Granville affirmed that, of course, she knew it by heart; and being urged to repeat it she in all sincerity said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions." Without troubling themselves to inquire whether or not this simple profession of faith might not be as efficacious as that of the Apostles' Creed and the Thirty-nine Articles, the disputatious Secularists made the story public,—not altogether to their own credit, it must be confessed. Some months later, however, the aforesaid secretary,—who was also a materialist,—was induced to lend his assistance one Saturday night in conveying back to the parish church a small harmonium which had been borrowed for use at a Penny Reading. An elaborate scheme had been hatched to test this young man's courage and the depth of his convictions, and in accordance therewith a sheeted ghost, with lambent flames flickering across its face, confronted the party on their return through the old churchyard. While the partners in the conspiracy were holding in their laughter, the materialist secretary temporarily forgot his reason, and when at length his trembling limbs resumed their functions he uttered a terrified shriek and fled like a deer, never stopping until he reached the town. When the story got wind, which it soon did, it was generally conceded that at any rate Ruth Granville reflected quite as much credit on the Church as the secretary threw back upon Secularism.

Under the kindly auspices of Lady Blanche and Mrs. Wallace, the Eclectics came gradually to realize that there was open to them a more excellent method of rivalling the Church and its agencies. One of the most successful of the measures now taken was the weekly woman's meeting, the matrons successively taking their part as entertainers, and there were other ancillary committees and sections, each having its own proper object and sphere. The doctor and his wife were very zealous co-operators, and indeed all the members of the society were pleased with the steps taken, except the secretary, who complained that sentimentalism and universal benevolence were causing the intellectual part of their propaganda to be

neglected. In his opinion the object of their existence as a society was attained when the absurdity of Christianity was made manifest to the people; "for his own part,"—he affirmed in general committee one evening,—“he felt sure that more real good was done by a trenchant lecture, by a professional speaker, on some such subject as the Trinity, and the utter unreasonableness of the doctrine, than by all the working sections of the association.” When, therefore, Lady Blanche pointed out that the most subtle metaphysician of the modern world,—the logically-mad author of the identity of contraries,—had, by a purely rational method, made the Trinity-in-Unity the logical capstone of his philosophical religion, the poor secretary was not able to reply. His pachydermatous self-sufficiency had been pierced to the quick, and he was not even able to cover his confusion with an ironical allusion to the vagaries of a too-ambitious intelligence. Shortly afterward he resigned his position as an official among the Eclectics, and by a unanimous vote of the members Mrs. Hanaford was chosen as his successor.

I fear, gentle reader, that I have already incurred thy rebuke for having, as it were, beguiled thee into reading these petty details of life in an obscure country town. Inasmuch, however, as they serve to illustrate the quiet revolution which has been working throughout human society during the last quarter of a century, I venture to crave thy kind indulgence. May we not consider the little fishing town as the microcosm containing within its petty limits the diminutives of the greater world of man? Moreover, bearing in mind the relativity of all things in all systems to their conscious centres, it is not improbable that to higher intelligences than our own the whole of humanity may seem protozoic, in which case it may be that the observation of one community of micro-organisms may be no less interesting than the study of the whole kingdom of human protozoa.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX

"COME HITHER, COME HITHER! HOW DID THIS ARGUMENT BEGIN?"

"FOR here have we no continuing city,"—this must we all acknowledge, whether princes or peers, bankers, merchants, or distillers of the blood, sweat, and tears of the millions into the man-debasing liquor of selfish luxury. Some there are who, happily for themselves, and greatly to their own consolation, can in all sincerity of faithful conviction repeat the other affirmation of the great Apostle,—“but we seek one destined to come.” Disguise it as we may, I take it, gentle reader, that you and I often find a melancholy interest in contemplating the vanity of human life. I know not how it may be to those who possess rude health and the means of testing all that the world offers to the Hedonist; but I nevertheless sometimes fancy that we are all justified in regarding the day of our birth as a dismal day—the first of a dolorous series inaugurated with the feeble wailings of a pitiful protest against fate. Even as I write, one of the wealthiest men of the district,—one of those so-called fortunate devotees of Commerce whose every thought seems to have solidified into gold,—has been summoned to witness the body of his drowned son, drawn from the cold waters of the thinly-frozen river. For him the light of life has been at once extinguished, the hope of his declining years suddenly wilted like a geranium in the frost; while to each one of us the storm and the zephyr as they go by either shriek or whisper the dread warning—“Thou too must suffer!” How vain it all is, this miserable fever of life, with its petty ambitions and strivings, its grasplings and accumulations!

Something like this were the thoughts of our hero one afternoon as he contemplated the first copy of his new book, fresh from the hands of the bookbinder in Paternoster Row. The work had occupied him about two years, and he had been in London since April,—it was now the end of May, 1887,—superintending its birth. Within its cover were reflected the minds of himself and his wife, as they themselves desired to be known to their contemporaries, and, it might haply be, to posterity. Yet, after all, how slight a thing it seemed, how



ephemeral!—an age-ship sent floating down the little stream of time, destined,—whatever men might say of it,—sooner or later to be engulfed in the great Nothingness which must supervene when the sum-total of human consciousness in its annihilation necessarily reduces all things whatever to nought. Neither Hugh nor Blanche was of those who shrink timorously from logical inferences because of apprehended consequences. Animated by the wish to promote, however slightly, the true philosophy of sound minds in healthy bodies, to point the way of common sense and reason amid the confusion of utterances philosophical, theological, and sciolistic, our hero had produced a book likely to please neither of the priest-hoods—theological, ideological, or scientific. As the event proved, it was a work which the clever critics and able editors thought it wiser to ignore than to notice; the former because, like most of their order, they were deficient in the power of abstract thinking; the latter because they instinctively recognized that absolute, uncompromising materialism was not altogether respectable,—that is, fashionable and lucrative,—and that, therefore, with the characteristic hypocrisy and sanotimoniousness of Englishmen of all classes, the book had better be ignored. Desmond was by no means surprised at this; it was too paltry a policy even to excite his anger against the commercialists and traffickers whose control of preases, types, and shops almost makes genius the thrall of Commercialism; and Blanche and cousin Maurice had determined that the first edition should not remain long on the publisher's shelves.

Soon after Hugh had begun to cut the leaves of his book, a knock was heard, and in reply to his invitation there entered his friends William Curtin and Charles Wiltshire. These two decidedly opposite characters had become very good friends with one another, and they had by their society contributed much toward making Hugh's stay in town agreeable. Nothing escaped Wiltshire, so he at once pounced upon the new book. "Aha!" he cried, "so this is the new treatise, is it! It has been well advertised, at any rate; but hang me if I know who reads such books. Yet it is always this kind of literature that survives,—I mean, that every age seems to be marked by its philosopher and his system or method, or whatever you may call it. Well, thank heaven! I shall never gain immortality by following so dusty a road, and by the same token,—



as Curtin would say,—I shall also avoid many a headache. But, Desmond, my friend, what a strange place this private hotel is, eh? Hang me if I don't think all the 'cranks' that come to London find their way to the Norwood."

"Is that a compliment to myself, Mr. Wiltshire?" asked our hero, laughing; "it certainly seems to have a sort of personal bearing."

"Upon my word, my dear fellow," returned Wiltshire, "I had no such thought. 'Present company,' you know, and so forth. No; but we just looked into the smoking-room for you before we came up, and upon my soul the place was full of May-meetingers, parsons, preachers, and the Lord knows who besides. Suppose we go down there and smoke our cigars? I assure you it is better than Cogers' Hall or the Forum."

"Just as you like, my friends," returned Hugh, taking his hat and stick, "but you must not forget our appointment at Wanstead Hall this evening, Mr. Wiltshire, you know."

"Plenty of time for that," said the other, "we can easily be at the station by six o'clock. Come on, then," and the party proceeded downstairs.

The smoking-room was a large and well-ventilated apartment, liberally furnished with small tables, after the style of a Parisian café. Seating themselves at one of these, the friends at once manifested a laudable zeal in the direction of studying character according to the scientific method,—that is, by patient observation of the persons around them. It was certainly, as Wiltshire had hinted, a motley gathering of between thirty and forty men, almost all of whom were ministers of religion sojourning at the hotel.

"There is to be a great meeting of the Gospel Alliance this evening in Exeter Hall," said Wiltshire, "and I suppose some of these gentlemen are to hold forth at it. Before I became a private secretary I was a sort of confidential clerk in the office of the Alliance, where I saw how the ropes are pulled to make the business of religion a profitable, that is, a lucrative, one. The Earl of Shaftesbury is to take the chair, these people turn the fanaticism of the old gentleman to good account, sending out all their circulars and calls in his name, and flattering him to the top of his bent."

"We Catholics," observed Curtin, "call him the Protestant Pope; but look at the party there on our right; sure, they are not parsons, I think."

The party alluded to numbered about half-a-dozen gentlemen of various ages. They were all very neatly dressed in well-fitting garments, but their faces were distinguishable by their extreme pallor. The settee on the right afforded seats for six persons, but as a stout, middle-aged man already occupied the middle seat, one of the new-comers was under the necessity of accepting the only vacant chair within reach, so that he sat midway between the three friends and his own companions. By that subtle freemasonry which attracts compatriots while sojourning among strangers, the stout man on the settee and the other strangers were not long in discovering that they were each and all citizens of the United States of America. While exchanging salutations stiffly and ceremoniously, it was evident that the stout man laboured under some restraint, which was especially noticeable in his manner toward the most clerical looking among the strangers,—a comparatively young, effeminate-looking man with black eyes and hair, the latter being parted in the middle and cut close to the head behind. On his part, the younger man was no less reserved, and for some time the conversation was almost wholly confined to the petty details of a voyage across the Atlantic. Charles Wiltshire, who had been steadily contemplating the features of the stout man, at last appeared to recognize him.

"By George!" he said, in rather too loud a tone, it must be confessed, "by George! Mr. Desmond, but I do believe that is Dwight, the evangelist."

"You are quite right, sir," remarked the man in the chair, "quite right. Yes, sir; that is the great Mr. Dwight, the evangelist. He is a remarkable man, sir, a most remarkable man; but he is behind the age, behind the age. I guess he is the most powerful preacher that the Christian church has ever produced, except perhaps the Apostle Paul, and he exercises great influence over the ignorant masses. Your Archbishop of Canterbury would give something, I guess, to procure a share of his wonderful natural gifts; but, after all, sir, Mr. Dwight is a hundred years too late. You see there before you, sir, types of the old and the new. The gentleman with the dark hair and eyes is Mr. Euripides Cicero Funk, the great apostle and expounder of scientific ethics, of the city of Chalcopolis, the future metropolis of America. I am one of his congregation,—my wife is a great admirer of Mr. Funk, and quite an enthusiast in the work; oblige me by accepting

her card. She often says that Mr. Funk reminds her of what the founder of Christianity must have looked like ; of course, that is only a flight of the imagination, but Mrs. Boggs is very poetic, very," and the stranger bowed to our hero and his friends.

Wiltshire having read the card passed it on to Curtin ; he in turn gave it to Desmond, who read it with some astonishment. It was something more than a mere visiting card, having clearly been made on "strict business principles," as the reader may learn from its perusal :

*Mrs. Aspasia De Boggs,*

27 Huron Street.

LADIES can repose the utmost confidence in Doctress De Boggs, a Graduate from the Royal University of Vienna ; very successful in curing ladies of barrenness ; takes ladies before and during confinement ; best of care ; strictly confidential ; adopts infants at her residence.  
Take Huron St. or Calhoun Ave. cars.

Desmond, first thanking Mr. De Boggs for his courtesy, ventured to inquire of that gentleman what an ethical congregation was, a question which the American received with a slight elevation of the eyebrows, expressive, it may be, of commiseration.

"Our object, sir," he replied, "is to practically demonstrate that the true basis of morality is to be found in the nature of man rather than in a supposed revelation from heaven. We hold that this basis is entirely the product of evolution ; that it varies with every age, according as the sum of human intelligence and progress increases ; and that, consequently, as man advances in intellectual development his standard of ethics, —his conscience, in fact,—becomes correspondingly elevated."

"I see," answered our hero, "so that the morals of the Athenians and after them the Romans, who were highly intellectual people, must have been very much superior to those of the Hebrews,—in short, that their ethical standards considerably surpassed the ten commandments of Moses."

"Mr. Funk has published a lecture, sir," observed Mr. De Boggs, "in which he speaks eulogistically of the character of

Moses, and explains that his shortcomings and the supposed necessity that he felt of basing his laws upon a divine sanction were due to the time, the character of the people, and so on, rather than to any deliberate intention to deceive."

"Really," said Desmond, "I think that Moses ought to be very grateful to Mr. Funk. May I ask if your society is a prosperous one?"

"Under the ministry,—if I may say so,—of Mr. Euripides Cicero Funk, it has steadily grown in repute among our most cultured classes in Chalcopolis, sir," replied Mr. De Boggs. Only the Episcopalians in our city can be said to be supported by a class distinctly superior to the patrons and supporters of the Ethical Society. Our ladies, especially, are animated by the most lofty altruism. They visit the poor, minister to the sick, and teach in the Sunday-school. Mrs. De Boggs is, in her own person, quite the right hand of the lecturer, and she is, in fact, a mother in our Israel."

"A nursing-mother, in fact, interposed the inerrigible Wiltshire. "I know the kind of people you Ethical societarians are. Yes, Mr. De Boggs, I have met many on your own side of the water. You are just plain infidels endeavouring to conceal the fact under a thin veneer of social respectability. You are trying to assume the vesture which American Unitarianism,—now shrunken and universally discredited,—can no longer wear. Your lecturers and ministers are the dumb dogs of opportunism, and setters forth of respectable platitudes. You are,—to use our good old English saying,—neither fish, flesh nor red-herring; the avowed infidel will not recognize you as a co-operator, while the meanest among the many mean sects of so-called Christians in America will not suffer its minister to associate with your little-great What's-his-name Funk. Look, sir, even that howling evangelist who is coming this way will not occupy a seat beside your lecturer if he can help it, and, by George! I honour him for it, too."

"You are prejudycod, sir, very much prejudycod," said Mr. De Boggs, "like nearly all Englishmen, I guess. The Ethical movement is as yet in its infancy, but it will grow, because it is a necessity of the coming age."

"All humbug, my friend," cried the obstinate, downright Wiltshire; "do I not know that its founder was a liberal-minded, cosmopolitan, clever Jew whose anterior cerebral lobes were somewhat less limited than those of his race gener-

ally and who was a splendid organizer? He was keen enough to discover that nearly every wealthy infidel was haunted by apprehensions of the inevitable results to the capitalists should the Christian religion and the institutions it sanctions ever be superseded by a theory of life based solely upon utilitarianism and the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Out of this discovery was evolved your bastard Ethical movement, whose real underlying aim is to provide a moral imposture, by means of which your rich unbelievers may be able to salve their consciences and to oppose the revolutionary spirit. As to your teachers, Mr. De Boggs, permit me to express the difference between What's-his-name Funk and that butcher-like evangelist who has just gone by;—the one flatters and absolves the rich, the other terrifies and humbly bugs the poor. Both are doubtless wise in their generation, but, for my part, I think neither is to be envied. You know we Englishmen are plain-spoken,—too damned free I have been called in your country; and if you stay long in London you will soon discover that the sitch-dropping Cockneys, as you term us, have a special knack for calling a spade a spade. I wish you a good afternoon, sir."

Having thus liberated his mind,—Mr. Wiltshire rose from his chair and was followed by our hero and William Curtin. Mr. De Boggs went over to the seat vacated by the evangelist, and at once proceeded to entertain his fellow-travellers with an account,—somewhat exaggerated of course,—of the rudeness of speech of the Englishman who had just left the room. Upon reaching the street, our hero ventured to expostulate with Wiltshire with respect to the severity of his remarks, but the newspaper man would not acknowledge that he had been guilty of a breach of decorum.

"I really cannot endure," he said, "the assumptions of these people. Every paltry sect and denomination among them speaks of itself as the salt of the earth, and the majority of them are always crowing like cocks about the grains of philosophy and religion that they pretend to derive from the straw that has been threshed out among Europeans nearly a hundred years ago. I declare that were I compelled once more to live in America,—which God in his mercy forbid! I would turn Roman Catholic out of sheer spite."

"And why not turn Catholic here in England, Mr. Wiltshire?" asked Curtin; "faith, it seems to me that we have



quite as much jangling and confusion as the Americans have."

"Because I have in the Church of England all that a Christian man requires,—apostolicity of origin, continuity of orders, a full measure of ordered liberty, and an adaptability to progress. No doubt she has her shortcomings as an institution, but these are not inherent or unyielding. The promise of the future is with her; she is all English, and I love her dearly, while I very much doubt if all the doctresses that ever graduated in Vienna will succeed in fostering anything likely to usurp her place as a teacher and promoter of good."

"She is certainly the noblest among the churches," observed Desmond, "the most truly Catholic, learned and devout. So much I, who am not a Christian, can freely acknowledge, and I think it not unlikely that she will prove to be the most progressive as she is, I believe, the most enlightened."

"Thank you, Mr. Desmond," said Wiltshire. "You are not the first sceptic that I have heard testify to this. I am not a fanatic or a controversialist, but I do love the old Church. But see, there's a hansom. Hi! there, cabby. Come on! Good day, Curtin!"

The reporter, crossing the street, took his way to Mr. Walter's office, while Wiltshire and our hero went off in the cab toward the city.

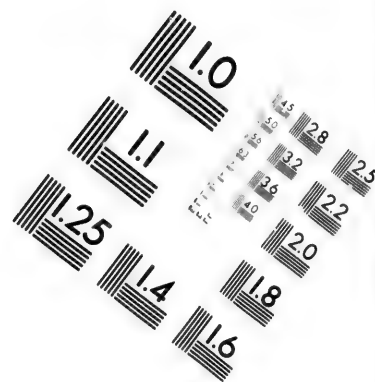
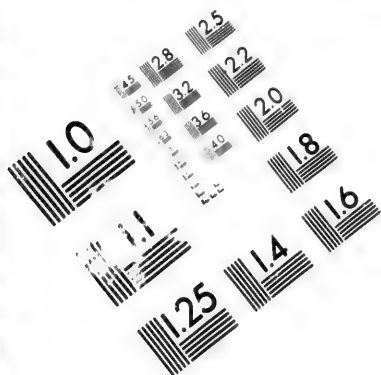
More than seven years had gone by since Hugh Desmond left the old school at Culm Tor. He had learned from Charles Wiltshire that Edith Allyn had been engaged upwards of three years as a lady-worker in mission work in a London parish, and that she had expressed a wish to enter a well-known sisterhood at the expiration of the term of her present engagement. On the way to the Hall our hero appeared somewhat thoughtful,—indeed, his memory was at work with the events of those fruitful years during which the boy had become an earnest, capable man. He found that time had dealt gently with his old friends, and the schoolmaster and his wife accorded him a kindly welcome. Not until Charles Wiltshire narrated his encounter with the ethical disciple did Mr. Toynbee make any allusion to the great mental change which had resulted in Desmond becoming a recognized apostle of rationalism, and when he did introduce the subject it was without his usual air of positive assurance and dogmatism. The brief discussion that ensued revealed the schoolmaster as



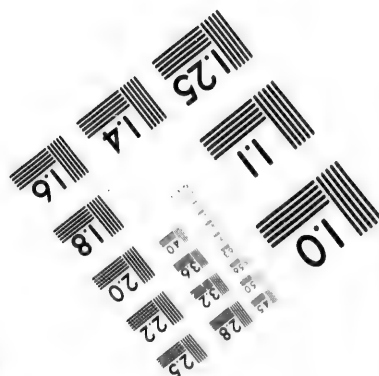
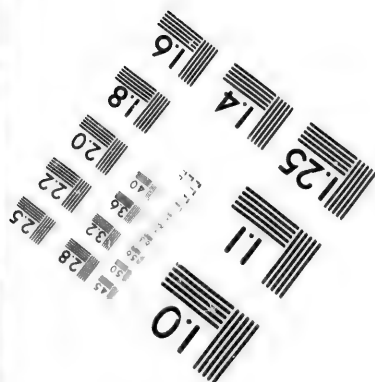
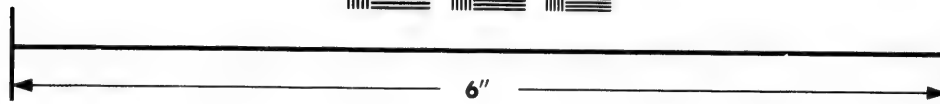
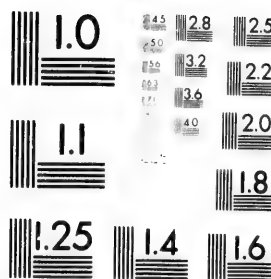
a by no means incompetent champion of Intuitionism, and he strenuously maintained the doctrine of intuitions antecedent to, and independent of, experience. It seemed to our hero that Mr. Toynbee had studied to some purpose the writings of the greatest abstract thinker the Church of England had nurtured, who would certainly have been regarded as the greatest reasoner of the century had he not suffered his fine intellect to be overshadowed by the pretensions of Roman theology. This was made more evident when Mr. Toynbee quoted with approval the affirmation that "whatever man's cognitive faculties indubitably declare as certain is thereby known to be infallibly true." Little by little the discussion drifted towards the question of the basis of morals, and here Mr. Toynbee was re-inforced by Wiltshire in maintaining that there was absolutely no thinkable basis of morality possible apart from the recognition of the existence of a personal God. It is no discredit to our hero to affirm that apparently he got the worst of the argument. Both of his opponents persisted in applying their thesis to society as existing at present, forgetting that the present system has been formed in accordance with the theory of a divinely-sanctioned moral code. Mrs. Toynbee, however, put an end to the debate by announcing that tea was ready, and thereafter the schoolmaster quite lost sight of Desmond's heresies while eulogizing his book on the Earl of Strafford's government of Ireland. Hugh told the story of his captivity among the moonlighters, which interested his hearers very much, Mr. Wiltshire being delighted with Dennis Heffernan's ruse and the downfall of Morgan Mannion. While Mr. Toynbee was helping himself to some currant jelly, Desmond ventured to ask a few questions respecting Miss Allyn.

"She is not at all well," answered Mrs. Toynbee, "the mission work has proved too exacting, as I feared it would. I quite forgot to tell you,—it is very curious,—but she has accepted an invitation from Mrs. Blakiston, whose brother is curate-in-charge of Edith's parish in town, to spend a few weeks in Torweston. She left for Devonshire last week: I did not know you were living there, or I would—have made Edith acquainted with the fact."

The good old lady had turned the concluding sentence very cleverly, but not quite so adroitly but that Hugh Desmond noted the hesitation in her speech. He threw an inquiring



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look toward Mrs. Toynbee, but all to no purpose as she appeared to be occupied with the tea. He did not know, but still he thought it not improbable, that Mrs. Toynbee, with a woman's intuition, had in the old days at Culm Tor suspected the nature of the feelings of her niece and the young assistant.

"Mr. and Mrs. Blakiston sometimes honour us with a call," he said, "so I shall probably have the pleasure of soon meeting Miss Allyn, and I hope of learning that our sea air is effecting a cure."

"When do you go down to Devonshire, Mr. Desmond?" inquired the schoolmaster; "I hope not so soon but that you can dine here say on Sunday."

"Thank you," answered our hero, "probably not before next week. Should all be well, I shall be very happy to accept your kind invitation for Sunday."

"Come in time for morning service, Mr. Desmond," said Mrs. Toynbee, "I am sure you will not refuse me that. I do so wish you would go to church with us once more."

"That I will with pleasure, my dear madam," replied Hugh, "and I thank you very much for allowing me the favour."

"You need not fear that Kirke will level a sermon at your individual head," said Mr. Toynbee. "He is not half combative enough for me; but he is a good parish priest, a good parish priest."

Our hero went about another hour with his old friends, and then, at Wiltshire's earnest request, accompanied the latter to his mother's cottage, "for the old lady,"—as her son observed,— "would be delighted once again to see the man who had rescued her darling from the Philistines." He found Mrs. Wiltshire happy and contented in the full enjoyment of a green old age. It was very late when Desmond returned to the Adelphi, and the first person he encountered in the hotel was his own servant, Tim Darragh, who met his master with a look betokening serious agitation of mind.

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## CHAPTER XL

"AND DEATH'S PALE FLAG IS NOT ADVANCED THERE."

HUGH Desmond knew at once that his servant was a bearer of ill news. No professional thought-reader was necessary to measure with abraded finger-tips his nerve contractions, and by these to discover the nature of the dominant idea or ruling motive in Darragh's mind. Like the shadows thrown by the rain-clouds over the lakes of Killarney, every emotion of Tim's honest heart was wont to be mirrored in his face.

"Something has happened, Tim," said Desmond, "something afflictive, or you would not be here. Tell me what it is, —I would rather know the full extent of an evil at once than have it held over me in suspense. Your mistress and the baby,—has anything happened to them?"

"Yes, your honour," answered Darragh, shutting the door of Desmond's room as they entered, "there has been a bit of an accident, and her ladyship would not allow them to telegraph to you. 'I will send you, Darragh,' she said, 'and you will explain it so as not to frighten Mr. Desmond,' and it seems, your honour, that I got here about an hour or so after your honour left last night."

"Then my wife, at all events, is well?" answered our hero; "and the baby, Tim? is it the baby?"

"The baby is well and hearty, sir," replied Tim, "but your honour will know all about it when you have heard the story, I think."

Very much relieved by these assurances, Desmond nodded, and his servitor went on with his narrative. Divested of its verbose redundancy, Tim's account set forth that two days ago Lady Blanche, Clara Wallace and the Squire had gone out in the *Lily* for a cruise in the bay and around the White Rock. It was a beautiful afternoon, there being a gentle breeze from the south-west. Darragh, who had accompanied his mistress and the Squire to the landing-slip, as soon as the *Lily* had cleared the harbour, strolled up to the Battery to smoke his post-prandial pipe and to enjoy the spectacle presented by some hundred fishing-boats spreading their lug-sails to the wind and departing for the fishing ground. The white sails

of the Lieutenant's lugger rendered her so conspicuous among the bark-dyed sails of the fleet that Tim could easily distinguish her as she stood out for an offing with the other boats. When about two miles from the harbour Mr. Wallace "hailed his wind" for the White Rock, having his sail well flattened with a taut sheet. Mr. Dunn, the pilot, and the coast-guard officer were on the Battery, and Darragh listened with some attention when the latter observed to the pilot:

"Take my glass, Mr. Dunn, and look out there where Wallace's lugger has Church point nearly abeam. You see how close she is to the wind, and mark the ripple outside the point. You may depend that beyond the point, in the open water, there is much more wind than they seem to anticipate."

"Yes, sir," returned the pilot, "but they have found that out too; I see Clymo overhauling the——Good heavens! she is on her beam; look, look!"

It was but too true; the *Lily* was a crank boat, not too well ballasted, the space amidships where the nets would have been stowed being occupied by a light cabin or raised cuddy. Just as she had got the point on her quarter a sharp gust of wind struck the sail while Clymo was about to "let go" the sheet, and in a moment the lugger capsized. Mr. Dunn, the officer and Darragh ran hurriedly to the station, the gig was manned by the attendants at coastguardsmen, and amid the cheers and exhortations of an excited crowd on the quays, the long swift boat sped like an arrow out from the harbour, through the Pool, and into the open bay. Happily, however, the accident had been witnessed by the fisher fleet, so that long before the gig reached the spot the whole party had been rescued. Lady Blanche and Clara had both been thrown clear of the lugger, so that Mr. Wallace and Clymo found it easy to place them on the bottom of the capsized boat, but the Squire had been caught by the sail, and it was some time before Clymo, —who was a fine swimmer and diver,—succeeded in bringing him to the surface.

"Five seconds more," said Jack, after Maurice had been laid on the bottom of the boat, "and it would have been too late. He still has life in him, but it was nearly touch and go. You see, Lieutenant, 'twas a good thing that our ballast was all loose, so that we shall save the boat. A ducking in May will not hurt very much."



"Never mind the boat," said Mr. Wallace, "but look to see if any help is coming."

"All right, sir," returned Clymo, "here they are; old Elvins ahead,—the fastest lugger in the channel, and half-a-dozen others behind him."

Old Elvins and his stalwart sons were not many minutes in transferring the unfortunates, while Clymo remained with the other boats, whose crews readily undertook to secure the lugger, and to tow her to the beautiful little beach just inside the point. Midway between the point and the harbour they encountered the gig, and even Mr. Dunn looked on approvingly while the coastguard officer placed a well-filled flask of brandy to the Squire's lips. By the time the harbour was reached cousin Maurice was restored to consciousness, but it was evident that he had received a severe shock, and it was found necessary to carry him from the landing-slip to the carriage which was in waiting. Blanche and Clara having also entered the vehicle, Dr. Hanaford jumped up beside Darragh, leaving the Lieutenant to make his way on foot to the Cot.

A careful examination of his patient led the doctor to infer that he had sustained some internal injury that might prove serious to one so advanced in years, and when this conviction was corroborated by Dr. Kekewich, Lady Blanche at once determined that Tim should convey the news to her husband.

"But why did she not give you a note, Tim?" inquired Hugh; "I am afraid that you are still concealing something from me. You have not told me all."

"Deed, then, your honour," said Tim, "but I have, except that maybe her ladyship has caught a slight cold,—as she well might after being drowned in that way. But I was to say that it was nothing,—only a feverish cold,—so your honour may not fret yourself to death entirely."

"I understand, Tim; she has probably a strong fever by this time. You must pack my trunk at once; we must be at Paddington by sunrise. Be as smart as you can, Tim, that's a good fellow."

"All right, sir," answered Darragh, "I will be all ready, never fear," and he straightway proceeded to fulfil his promise, while our hero, taking some telegraph forms, wrote explanatory messages to Curtin, Wiltshire, and the Toynbes.

During the greater part of the journey to Devonshire Des-

mond was alone. He was glad to be so, for it is not always true that distress is alleviated by companionship. Hitherto our hero had, on the whole, found life grateful and pleasant. He was happily united to a wife who was assuredly so sympathetic as to warrant the application of the free-love term of his affinity. They had love, health competence, many estimable friends, and their lives were by no means objectless or deficient in incentive. Peculiarly favoured in these respects, they were also fortunate in having,—perhaps as far as was possible at their age,—excogitated a rule of life based upon reason, a standard which was a synthesis of mind and heart, intellect and emotion, guaranteeing at once virtue and happiness, and promising that their careers would “lie in a direct path between excess and defect.”\* Now, however, it might be that the time was at hand when he, too, would have to witness and patiently endure a change of fortune. He knew that the royal Preacher, while advising men to be joyful in prosperity and considerate in adversity, had affirmed that “God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him;” while the scarcely less wise Pagan fabulists showed their sense of the allotting power of that universal Nemesis whose office and administration “it is,” says Verulam, “to hinder the constant and perpetual felicity of happy men, and to interpose her word,—*Veto*, I forbid the continuance of it; that is, not only to chastise insolency, but to intermix prosperity (though harmless and in a mean) with the vicissitudes of adversity, as if it were a custom that no mortal man should be admitted to the table of the gods but for sport.” While speeding westward to encounter his sorrow, Desmond had ample opportunity of testing the sustaining power, the bearing strain of his philosophy, and to be satisfied therewith. Nay, more than this, he even thought himself endowed with greater fortitude than religion could bestow, inasmuch as his willing readiness to allow that “whatever is, is right” effectually shielded him from the danger of mind-enfeebling complaints like those of Job, or futile bemoanings like those of the typical martyr-altruist—

“The foe of Zeus and held  
In hatred by all Gods  
Who tread the court of Zeus :

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\* Bacon : “Scylla and Learys, or the Middle-Way.”

And this for my great love,  
Too great for mortal men."\*

The soundets philosophy, however, though it can prepare the mind to endure hardships like a good soldier,—just as religion does, but by different methods,—cannot render pointless the barbed arrows of Fate. A sudden sense of weariness, a dull, leaden feeling within his bosom, came upon our hero when, as he was ascending the zigzag pathway, his eye fell upon the darkened windows of Blanche's room. The door was opened by Mrs. Wallace, and almost before crossing the threshold he learned from her that his wife was seriously ill with inflammation of the brain. Everything had been done that was possible; the two doctors, Kekewich and his son-in-law, were unremitting in attention, and a lady from the vicarage, who, it was said, had great experience in the sick room, had kindly volunteered her services immediately after the unfortunate accident at the White Rock and its consequences had become known.

"I thought it right to avail myself of her kind assistance," added Mrs. Wallace, "because there are no trained nurses in Torweston, and you know, Mr. Desmond, that we have two patients, although I am glad to say that, for the present at least, your cousin is in no danger. He is now able to sit up in an invalid chair in his own room, but he has sustained a severe shock, a very severe shock for his time of life. But I will see Miss Allyn, and inquire if it be advisable for you to see Lady Blanche."

Once more left to himself, Desmond could not help marveling at the course of events which had brought Edith Allyn to the relief of his wife. He knew instinctively how valuable her presence would be in such an emergency, but he felt an unaccountable reluctance to meet her. When the door was again opened he turned, expecting to see Mrs. Wallace, and found himself face to face with Edith. Coming forward, she extended her hand to Hugh, who received it with a low obeisance of mingled respect and esteem.

"I thought I myself would be the bearer of good news," she said. "Lady Blanche is, thank God! much better; the change we have looked for has occurred and is a favourable

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\* Æschylus, "Prometheus Vincitæ:" Dr. Plumptre's translation.

one. Later on, I think you may see her, but at present absolute quiet is necessary. There must be no excitement."

"You will find me in all things most obedient, Miss Allyn. Your presence here is that of an angel of mercy, I know, although I confess I was afraid to meet you. I could not be otherwise, for how can I hide from myself that in all probability you regard me as being in more senses than one a recreant and a traitor?"

"You forget," she said, "that it is my mission to do as I am doing, or perhaps you do not know it."

"I only learned it yesterday from your aunt, Miss Allyn, when I was at Wanstead, and I was by no means prepared for the information. Believe me, that when I met you at the Wiltshires' I had been given to understand that you were betrothed to Mr. Kirke. It was not wholly a hasty conclusion, my mind had been previously prepared to receive it by what I have since discovered to have been idle gossip. It was Destiny."

"I think, nay, I am sure," replied Edith, "that it was the direction of God, to which, as I once wrote to you, it was our duty to submit. But I forget; you are not a Christian, you have taken sides against us. But I have read much that you have written in the magazines, and I know that now, as before, you are earnest in the line of your convictions. And now we will bury the past, with its errors and mistakes, and address ourselves to the present duties. I am glad that aunt Mildred told you so much about myself, so that you will perhaps not object to my remaining here until your wife has recovered her health."

"Have I not said that your presence here is that of an angel of mercy, Edith?" asked Hugh, "and do men ever banish angels whose ministry is one of mercy and good from their homes? If you only knew how gladly I consign my dear wife to your care, how grateful she herself will be when restored, you would not doubt us."

"You must call me Sister, then," she said, "and speak no more of the past. And now, will you not go up to your cousin? I am sure he is eagerly looking for you. To-morrow, with God's blessing, I think you may see Lady Blanche."

"Sister Edith," he replied, "your religion is that of the Master,—'I was sick and ye visited me.' With such a religion I have no quarrel. Yes, I will go to Cousin Maurice."

They left the room together, much as in the old days they

would have gone toward the class-room at Culm Tor. Of the twain Edith was far less changed in appearance, and not even the studied simplicity of her dress could detract from her beauty, the promise of seven years ago being more than fulfilled in the finished maturity of her twenty-eighth summer. The rich chestnut hair was more simply braided and confined, the large liquid brown eyes somewhat more introspective than of yore, as must needs be with eyes that have looked pityingly into London's wretchedness, that have looked on with sympathy when the victims of over-civilization and its vices have laid themselves down to die. Her hands had smoothed the pillow of despair, had helped to cool the parched lips and fevered brow of many an outcast stranded for ever and aye on the shores of the black whirlpool of the metropolis. And even as the very precious ointment which flowed from the alabaster box on to the Master's head softened and made more sensitive the hands that ministered, so had this compassionate experience perfected Edith's character and made her nature more gracious, benignant, and loving. The discipline had been painful and grievous, but the sweet womanly virtues had been all the more surely strengthened and developed, so that, however some might question the faith which produced it, none could undervalue that which the belief imparted,—the inward adorning "which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." Intent on subduing nature, Edith had, on that terrible Wednesday evening preceding the wedding at St. Ambrose's, determined so to live that, fortified by grace, renunciation itself should become a means to happiness. There are doubtless other systems,—especially one great Humanitarian religion,—equally capable of inspiring such a degree of renunciation and self-denial, but methinks, O reader benevolent, that such a steadfast purpose of transmuting bitter to sweet can only be engendered by Christianity. When, therefore, shortly after Edith's arrival at Torweston, the hand of affliction came over the lady who had supplanted her, besides being moved by compassion, Edith also saw an opportunity of confirming her own strength. Putting aside his dislike of Hanaford, the vicar at once told the doctor of his visitor's wishes and experience, and Mr. Kekewich himself strongly urged Mrs. Wallace to avail herself of the proffered assistance. Nevertheless, it was a trial for Edith to meet Hugh once again, for as à Kempis says,—as referred to in the

seventh chapter of this history,—*Natura inclinat ad creaturas*, so that oftentimes when we delude ourselves that the former fires are extinguished, and that the crater where they leaped and bubbled is now a smooth and verdant level, we are liable to be confounded by an eruption of the same old flame. However, the ordeal she had most feared had been undergone, and despite the fact that her whole organization yet tingled with the subtle influence evoked by the grasp of his hand, Edith returned to the sick chamber with her mind more tranquil than it had been for years.

As for our hero, he had learned, as we all should do, to control his emotions. Active experience among men will sometimes impart this self-mastership, although far less certainly than men of action would have us believe. Now, as of yore, is philosophy the mistress of life, alike potent to ward off disdain of the lowly cottage or envy of the splendid palace. He had loved Edith Allyn with all the warmth and fervour of a first love, and he knew there was no disloyalty to Blanche involved in the acknowledgment to himself that he loved Edith still. He instituted no comparison between his feelings for her and Blanche; his love for his beautiful and noble wife was altogether without alloy, and he looked forward with glad anticipation to a time when they could unite in regarding Edith as a dear and honoured sister. Nor was this anticipation at all impaired by his knowledge of the different theories which underlay and regulated their respective lives, for he thought he knew Edith well enough to warrant the assurance that in due time she would be brought to see that, in the case of himself and Blanche, what the superficial observers were wont to call Atheism was in reality the identification of themselves with the Universal Oneness, which shortsighted men have in all ages only denominated God by way of hiding from themselves their own blindness. While these thoughts passed through his brain, our hero made his way toward his cousin's room, and, knocking at the door, he heard with pleasure the Squire's invitation,—spoken with his usual heartiness,—to enter.

The old gentleman's chair was drawn up between the fire and a small table, on which stood a few books and various magazines and newspapers.

"Well, my boy," said Maurice, "I am sorry that your home-coming should be attended with so much to depress you.



But it is the common lot, Hugh, the common lot. As for myself, it might be just as well this way as any other, but for our dear one it is very sad."

"She is much better, cousin," replied Hugh, "so much so that I am to see her in the morning. And now tell me all about yourself, so that I may be able to give her a faithful report, and I hope one that will cheer her no less than the consciousness of her own assured restoration to health and happiness."

"Have you seen Owen since your return?" inquired the Squire. "He has been with me nearly all day, and has benefited me more than the medicine."

"He is sound asleep in his cot, cousin; but you must answer my question. Tell me all about yourself and your feelings, I entreat you."

"Well, my dear boy, Tim has told you that I have been more than half drowned, when the boat 'turned turtle,' as Wallace called it yesterday. At first the doctors thought I had suffered some internal injury, but when I heard them say so I felt very much like one of the two unbelievers who are said to be inseparable from three doctors. There is no internal injury, Hugh, and I shall soon be all right again, but you do not need to be told that when an old land-lubber like I am finds himself turned over in a boat he is liable to be very much upset. Ha, ha!" and cousin Maurice actually laughed very much in his old pleasant manner. "Now I want you to write a few lines to Tom Cahill, if you are not too tired, telling him all you know respecting the accident, for should he by any chance come to know anything from the newspapers, he would instantly cross over. Tell him that I am not half so much hurt as frightened, and that I am getting over that now."

Our hero, very glad to find his cousin so full of hope in his speedy recovery, wrote at once to Father Tom. The remainder of the evening was occupied in hearing the Squire's account of the capsizing of the *Lily*, and with Hugh's recital of his own doings in London, the new book being, of course, produced for criticism of its binding and general appearance. Long before he retired to rest, Hugh was convinced that his cousin's temperament was a by no means inconsiderable factor in promoting his recovery. The painful symptoms attendant upon his restoration to consciousness, and which were for some time

thereafter considered to indicate internal injury, had departed, and the proneness of age to forget recent occurrences was already tending to diminish the violence of the shock.

On the following morning Edith herself conducted our hero to his wife's room, strictly enjoining on him the necessity of avoiding excitement.

"I will allow you just ten minutes," she said, "and when I return you must retire. Remember that tranquillity is now our best ally. You must be as calm as possible."

So saying, she opened the door, and Hugh followed her into the chamber. Not until she had seen him stoop and kiss the pale brow did Edith retire, shutting the door behind her so noiselessly that for some moments they did not know she had gone.

"My darling," said Hugh, holding Blanche's hand in both his own, "you have been very ill since I left you. They should have taken better care of you in my absence; but you are better now, my love."

"Yes, dear," she replied, "I suppose I have been very ill, very near leaving you, I think. You came home yesterday, the nurse tells me, and the improvement was coincident with your return. O Hugh! I do not know how I fell ill; I was not very much frightened by the accident."

"It was the exposure, my love," said Hugh, "and perhaps your anxiety for our cousin; but never mind now. You are restored to me, and will soon be well again. Do you know, my darling, that I seem to regret the old faith in so far as without it I cannot find words adequately to express my thankfulness. For I am thankful, although I hardly know to what or to whom."

"I know, dear," answered Blanche. "I, too, have the same happy emotion. But surely we may say, Thank God! in the fulness of our gladness at the knowledge that the order of nature in this case coincides with our dearest wishes. For God, they tell us, is but Good, therefore we may apostrophise it."

"Well then, my darling, I will say Thank God from the bottom of my heart; but, Blanche, you must not talk or even suffer your brain to exert itself more than you can avoid. Do you know, dear, that they contemplated sacrificing your hair, but Hanaford thought it might be spared. So you see, my

love, that except for your paleness, there is no great change, and in a few weeks you will be lovelier than ever."

"And cousin Maurice?" she asked, "and our baby? What of them?"

"Cousin Maurice is doing well, my love, and he will come to see you to-morrow and will bring Owen with him. And now, let me kiss you good-bye until the evening, when I am to visit you again. Be quite at ease, dear, now that you have turned the corner we are all happy."

"Before you go, Hugh, tell me who is the lady who attends on me. She is so gentle and so loving, and oh, how very beautiful she is, dear. I have a confused recollection that at some period of my illness I saw or heard her praying. I know she is a Christian by the cross and chain of Venetian gold around her neck."

"She has been a missionary in a London parish," answered Hugh; "she came to the vicarage here for a change of air, and offered her assistance when the news of your illness became known. She is the niece of the Mr. Toynbee of whom you have heard me speak so often, and you will find her worthy of your friendship. Yes, she is a Christian, and a good one."

"Was she at Culm Tor while ——"

"Hush, my love," said our hero with a smile, "or I shall have you asking why I did not fall in love with her. She is, I am sure, an angel of mercy wherever she goes, and as an angel, my dear Blanche, we can love her. You remember the antiphon, '*Hæc est virgo sapiens, et una de numero prudentum.*' Well, I know Miss Allyn to be one of the wise and prudent, and you will like her very much."

A light tap at the door was followed by the entrance of Edith. As she drew near the bedside Hugh said:

"My love, this is Miss Edith Allyn, a valued friend in the past, a generous helper in the present."

Edith bent for a moment to touch her patient's cheek, when Blanche raised her arm and drawing her nurse toward her greeted her with an affectionate kiss.

"He has told me of your goodness, dear," she whispered, "and oh, I am so grateful!"

"But you must not talk any more now, dear," said Edith, returning the kiss, "or the doctor will look very serious at

his approaching visit and will perhaps forbid Mr. Desmond's coming to see you for some days."

With a heart considerably lightened, our hero soon after started out to walk over to Tormavy. Almost every person he met in the street greeted him pleasantly and made kindly inquiry after the invalids, so that Desmond experienced the pleasing sensation of feeling that he and his household were liked and respected throughout the little town. He found Mr. Wallace and Clymo about to cross the bay to the beach where the lugger was being refitted, and he at once volunteered to take an oar. Thereupon the Lieutenant shipped the rudder and took the lines, and soon the light yawl was skimming over the blue water. On the way the Lieutenant gave our hero a graphic account of the accident, blaming himself rather severely. However, Hugh's assurance that no one could have foreseen such a calamity, and that, after all, the consequences would not be serious, gradually restored Mr. Wallace to his own good graces. The party returned to Tormaston in the lugger, and as she entered the Pool a shout of welcome arose from the wharves and the fishing boats.

The Lieutenant dined at the Cot that day, finding to his great delight that the Squire was so far recovered as to be present, and he listened very meekly while Maurice mischievously commented on the inconsistency of a naval officer being unable to navigate a fishing-boat. At last, finding that his friend seriously thought he was being deservedly rebuked, the Squire said: "But, my dear Lieutenant, sure I am only joking. The boat was doomed to capsizes that day, and she did so."

"You can predicate some such fate for all under-ballasted craft,—aye, and for such men and women too, I suppose," said Hugh; "but, at any rate, the lugger has ballast enough now."

"Kismet, kismet! it was the hand of Fate," cried the Squire, "which took this way of bringing together the two loveliest and best women in the world. I saw and talked with the lady who is nursing Blanche this morning, and I am now over head and ears in love. Mrs. Wallace," continued the old gentleman, "your husband's seamanship is going to prove the means of reconciling the Christian religion and sceptical philosophy."

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## CHAPTER XLI.

## "THE STATELY FLOWER OF FEMALE FORTITUDE."

**I** HOLD it to be well-nigh incontrovertible, dear reader, that the world seldom appears more pleasant to the senses than it does during one's recovery from a serious illness. Except in that higher resipiscentia when the mind emerges from the slough of despondency into which it has fallen when some long-cherished idol or belief,—for years implicitly trusted to and revered,—has been dislodged, overturned, and shattered, there is no other regeneration wherein the feeling of unification with Nature is so absolute and so delightful. If, as in the case of Blanche Desmond, the time of convalescence be in early summer, when the trees and flowers are at their best and brightest, the mated birds in uncloyed enjoyment of conjugalism, and the sweet, healthy juices spreading vigour through every leaf and fibre of the oak and every joint and grain of the rustling cereal, then is the pleasure all the greater, especially if the illness have been sufficiently grave to threaten, as the astrologers used to say, the house of life. If, poet-like, we wanted a simile, we might perhaps compare such a convalescence to the change of heart produced in a sinner who has "gone the pace" by that mysterious Methodistic process called instantaneous regeneration. On second thoughts, however, we bethink ourselves that poetry has nothing in common with hypocrisy, cant, and humbug; therefore, dear reader, we beg leave to drop the simile, confining our pen to the less pretentious duty of recording the leading events in the lives of the protagonists in this our chronicle.

Before the farmers and yeomen of Devonshire had quite made up their minds to commence operations in the harvest field, Lady Blanche was so far restored as to be driven out in the carriage every day. Between her and Edith a warm friendship had been established, and when Dr. Hanaford,—mindful of the fact that the approaching fishing season would be somewhat too pregnant with evil odours to accord well with a delicate person,—suggested a tour on the Continent, Blanche earnestly pleaded with Edith that she would consent to accompany them. For some time she was unsuccessful in obtaining her consent, until Hugh himself,—having discovered that Edith

had no immediate intention of resuming her mission in London, —urged her to take on pity her friends. Seeing that she wavered, Blanche kissed her and said :

"Write to your aunt, dear, and ask her advice if you will. Tell her how much I desire to have you with me as a dear sister, that in my present state of weakness I should prove a terrible burden to my husband, and should be compelled to look to Madeleine for such direction as only a lady could give. Tell her all this and more ; say that I, who have never had a sister, have now found one in you, and that, at least for the present, your true mission is by her side."

Thus entreated, Edith found her resolution wavering until at last she agreed to write to her aunt Mildred and in some measure to be guided by her advice. It could not well be otherwise, because she found that there were

"——— a thousand tongues to allure her,  
And but one to bid her go."\*

The evening before the answer from Mrs. Toynbee arrived, however, something occurred that rendered it much easier for Edith to grant her friend's request. She and Blanche were sitting together in a room overlooking the street, both being interested in the excitement and perturbation caused throughout the town by the intelligence that a large "school" of pilchards was in the bay, and that at least two seines had succeeded in enclosing enough fish to set hundreds of busy hands at work the next morning. Our hero and his cousin, carried away with the general ardour, had accepted an invitation from Mr. Dunn to go out in his boat to behold the brilliant spectacle of an immense circular net crowded with myriads of dazzlingly phosphorescent prisoners, and their return was not looked for much earlier than midnight. Gradually, as the evening advanced, the unlighted streets became less interesting, so that Edith soon drew the curtains and rang for the lamp to be brought up.

"And now, dear," she said to Blanche, "if you are not too tired, I will read you a few chapters of 'Middlemarch.' Let me see, I think we left off at chapter fifty-three, the meeting between Raffles and Bulstrode : shall I go on dear !"

"Not unless you particularly wish to do so, dear," returned

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\* See the beautiful erotic song, "Dulcina," in the Pepys Collection,



Blanche. "I hope you will not mind my saying that I find the book excessively dreary. It is surely a needless waste of energy so microscopically and finically to analyze the motives of even the most insignificant actions of so many uninteresting people. I really feel that the paragons of virtue whom the last century novelists were wont so opportunely to deliver from the toils of Comus would be a relief to these preternaturally dull Dorotheas and Rosamonds. I think, dear, I would rather hear you sing, or if you prefer it let us sit here and talk."

"I did not quite like to say so," said Edith, "but I have often thought, since we began to read it, that the book was uncommonly dull. But I was almost afraid to think so with respect to a writer so eminent and so gifted."

"Yes, dear, custom and fashion make cowards of us all in such matters. George Eliot is, as you say, nobly endowed by nature, but her extraordinary egoism has been even more disproportionately developed by too much solitude and by too concentrated devotion to literature. Just as the innate conceit of every German student,—you know I read German,—induces him to add his quota to the dust-heap of *schulfuchsserei*, or pedantry, which the Teutons call philosophy, so does George Eliot bring all the tests and instruments of her laboratory to illustrate and explain the motives of very commonplace characters. Let us, at least for the time, leave 'Middlemarch' to the admiration of those fledgling world-reformers of both sexes whose enthusiasm for humanity induces them to put pencil-marks in the margins of the novels they borrow from the circulating library. See here, for instance,"—and Blanche took up the book,—"*is one such mark, and a whole line underscored by a somewhat unsteady hand. What is the passage? 'This is the big folks' world, this is.'* Yet there is, it seems to me, no great profundity in this remark."

"It is," replied Edith, "certainly no very original discovery, for King Solomon says that 'The rich ruleth over the poor,' that 'Wealth maketh many friends,' and so on in his proverbs."

"You are very familiar with the Bible, Edith," said Blanche; "it is seldom that you fail to find some passage apposite to the subject of conversation."

"It is an inexhaustible treasury of wisdom, dear," returned Edith, "and I do not think that human life will ever be so

changed as to its conditions that the Scriptures will lose their adaptability of application."

"It may be so, my dear," said Blanche, "because, as my husband says, their maxims are those of men who studied human nature in its simplest and truest forms, forms which still subsist, however veiled and perhaps disfigured by the veneer of subsequent civilizations. Hugh is still very fond of the Old Testament, but I was brought up a Roman Catholic, and I am, therefore, not so well acquainted with the Bible. I should so much like to hear from you something about Hugh when he was at Culm Tor. What did you think of him then?"

The question was so unexpected that Edith was altogether unprepared to meet it. A vivid blush overspread her countenance, and for a moment she could not hide her confusion. Lady Blanche saw this with astonishment, and with a woman's intuition she recognized at once that her companion was strangely agitated.

"Why, Edith dear," she said, "what does this mean? My question has annoyed you. I see it all, my love, I think. Is this your secret? and perhaps the reason why you scrupled to go abroad with us?"

Edith's only answer was to fall on her knees and bury her head in the folds of Blanche's dress. For a few moments there was a painful silence, broken at last by Blanche, who, gently stroking the chestnut hair, said:

"And so you loved him, little one, and he did not know it? Is that so?"

"I think he knew it, dear, before we parted," answered Edith, "but it was only a dream. Oh, forgive me, and let me go. How can I remain here should he come to know of this?"

"But he will never know it, Edith, and the tie that binds you and me shall be all the stronger for this. How could it have been otherwise, and he so good, so beautiful, so noble? He thinks of you as the old saints thought of their angels, dear. I do not blame you for having loved him, Edith; I almost think I should be vexed had he not influenced you in some degree as he influenced me. But will you not be his sister too, now that you are mine? Believe me that he is worthy of the love of such a sister."

"I am quite sure of that," replied Edith, "and I have long since acknowledged that it was a higher wisdom than mine

that fashioned both our destinies. Just now I imagined that perhaps your husband, dear, had hinted to you that in the old days at Culm Tor, when we were thrown together, I had,—in short, that I had shown myself not insensible to the influence you speak of."

"No, dear," said Blanche, "Hugh is not one of those who pride themselves upon what the world terms their conquests. It was your tell-tale blushes, dear, that sufficiently betrayed the secret. I saw in a moment that there was an old memory by which you were troubled. But is there no later memory powerful enough to reconcile you to,—to,—I mean, have you never met another worthy of the love of so noble and, let me say, so beautiful a woman?"

"I do not think I shall ever marry," returned Edith, "I am already as sober as an old maid, dear. I have seen so much of human wretchedness that I have felt it my duty to devote my life to the service of God's poor. I shall probably join a sisterhood after my return to London."

"But you will not leave us yet, Edith? you will go with us to sunny Italy, and perhaps before we return you may discover that it is not necessary for one who would serve humanity to abjure and sunder herself from the cares and pleasures, the good and evil of social life. Surely those who are agitated by the same sorrows best know how to minister to the afflicted?"

"Well, dear, provided aunt Milly does not object, I will go," she said. "The little secret you have discovered makes,—I mean your knowledge of it makes it much easier for me to accede to the proposal. It was, dear, absolutely buried on the morning of your marriage; it was to assure myself of this that I went to St. Ambrose's that morning."

"Is it possible that you were there?" inquired Blanche.

"Yes," she said, "it was there that I first saw you, dear, in all your queenly beauty: and you will not be angry if I say that when I saw you my disappointment,—if we may so call it,—passed away. We will never speak of this again, dear, if you please, so forgive me when I add that when I saw your face as you left the altar I knew that Providence had guided Hugh Desmond in his choice of a wife."

"You little flatterer!" said Blanche, "to speak of my queenly beauty in this manner. Do you want to make me vain?"

"When the accident befell you and I heard of your illness," continued Edith, "a great longing came upon me to be near you, to render you some little service, to help in rescuing Mr. Desmond's wife perhaps from death. I never dreamed that you would grow to like me so much, to grant me your friendship,"—she said artlessly,— "or perhaps I might have foreseen that you would come to learn the secret, and thus I should—"

"Not have proved the dear sister you have shown yourself," interrupted Blanche, "dearer now, if possible, than before. Kiss me, Edith dear; the destiny that has so strangely connected our lives is a kind one to me, at least. And now will you not tell me whether or not my husband in his manhood fulfils the promise of his youth?"

The perfect understanding established between the friends could not have been better demonstrated than it was during the remainder of this discourse. Edith's generous acknowledgment that Hugh was both physically and mentally all that his early friends could have ventured to anticipate was so tranquilly given that she might almost have been a sister in reality recounting her brother's praises. Very gently and tenderly,—almost timorously,—did she express her regret that our hero was not a Christian.

"It seems so strange," she said, "that this should be so, for Mr. Desmond was once so very earnest a Christian, so very zealous a churchman. And to think that one who,—as I once heard uncle say,—might have proved so able a champion of the faith, should now be without hope of a future and 'without God in the world.'"

"Then you think that human life without the hope of heaven is a sort of objectless drifting from nothing to nowhere?" asked Blanche. "It is not quite correct to describe Mr. Desmond as being 'without God in the world,' for both he and I recognize God in all things,—not indeed a personal Being capable of morphological imaginings, but the Universal Being only to be apprehended by himself, known only as a whole to his own consciousness."

"I am not a controversialist, dear," said Edith, "and I know I am far from clever and not at all profound. But I think I see clearly that in order to know aught of his will we should expect the Universal Being to reveal himself to us as a personality. Otherwise we should indeed, as you say, be only drifting from nothing to nowhere, without a guide, with-

out a haven except the grave. By faith, however, we are rescued from this really terrible condition of blind groping, which really seems to me like trusting to chance whether for weal or woe. Will you allow me to read a chapter or so of the Epistle to the Ephesians? I should so like to hear what you, a sceptic, would say of it."

"Thank you, Edith dear, read them by all means; I will pay the closest attention, and I will tell you what I think."

Thus encouraged, Edith drew a small Testament from her pocket and began to read from the second chapter, continuing, at Blanche's request, to the end of the epistle. Having finished, she placed the little book on the table.

"There, dear," she said, "we have first the assurance of redemption from the evil of our own natures,—from that very evil proneness which by the natural law progressive time would surely heighten and intensify,—then the promise of atonement, that is, of reconciliation or unification with God, and finally the plainest directions by which to regulate our lives."

"Yes," answered Blanche, "all this I am most willing to acknowledge. The superstructure is shapely and consistent, but what if the foundation be not assured? Do you not know that the wide savannah, or prairie, even though its trails were indistinct or confused, would be chosen by the traveller as a safer abiding-place than the most comely and fair-proportioned house whose foundations rested upon quicksand! Where claims are made such as those which form the groundwork of the Mosaic and Christian systems, the uninquiring mind, unable or unwilling to investigate,—or the biassed mind confined within the circle of dogmatic education,—may have faith, and its profession of belief is as natural as it is, I do not doubt, satisfactory. But in those other cases, now so common throughout the civilized world, where the mind qualified to investigate discovers, let us say, the inadequacy of the evidence used to support those claims, there can be no true faith, but only credulity. Let me ask you to observe the distinction, for it is a grave, a serious one. To thrust a doubt aside rather than to meet it openly is not to exercise faith,—which even when misplaced is honourable because conscientious,—but to take a coward's refuge in credulity. May I venture to suggest that, even from the point of view of a personal God and a special revelation, it seems like blaspheming the source

of all reason to refuse to obey the dictates of one's reason? Would not such a refusal be the greatest of sins,—that is, a sin against conscience?"

"It may be so," said Edith. "I suppose one must honestly endeavour to live up to one's convictions: although where there is the least shadow of a doubt that, after all, one's reason may be at fault, it is surely best not to break away from that which has been and is the source of hope and consolation, the fountain of good to so many millions. When I reflect upon the terrible evils that encompass us, the sickness, the want, the sorrow, the unequal distribution of the world's wealth, and the long-drawn agony that life is to thousands, I think sometimes that it is only religion that makes society tolerate its own burdens."

"And in so thinking, dear, you are probably right," observed Blanche, "but do you never think that the same religion that makes us acquiesce in the burdens, as being of divine ordination, is primarily responsible for their existence?"

"I fear I do not quite understand your meaning. Surely you cannot hold Christianity responsible for the evils of life?"

"I fear there is no other alternative, dear, although I distinguish between the teachings of Jesus,—who loved mankind so ardently that selfishness and hypocrisy stood wilted, shamed, and in all their naked deformity in his presence,—and the system which has grown up under his name. Moreover, Edith, the burdens are none the less real and hard to endure because the force which compels endurance can avail itself of the supposed decrees of Heaven in extenuation and justification of its own exercise."

"Yes," replied Edith, "life's burdens are hard to bear, much harder in our present civilization than they seem to have been in the past. But so long as men require to be governed at all there must be force of some kind, because government implies force, and the tyrant Necessity would always furnish a justification. The decrees which you qualify as 'supposed' have had their potency counterbalanced and influenced by the operation of the assurance contained in the words, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' The effect we can surely recognize in the benevolence which has raised countless institutions for the alleviation of suffering, and which we know to be quietly, unostentatiously at work daily and hourly



wherever those who call themselves by the Christian name are to be found. May it not be, dear, that the evils we deplore exist not because of but in opposition to and disregard of religion? Is it not appalling to reflect upon the revolution which must inevitably come upon the social fabric when the force you speak of shall lose its influence?"\*

"You forget, dear," said Blanche, "that the benevolence or altruistic sentiment of which you speak has become so much a part of our nature that it is now independent of the illusions which so powerfully affected the lives and characters of those whose teachings first made it imperative. It has become a habit, and reason,—being well assured of its salutariness,—is able to warrant and support it on the strong ground of necessity. Are we not therefore assured that the revolution which is to come will be mildly conducted, however thorough and complete it may be? Of one thing we may be reasonably confident,—that human society will always endeavour to mould itself in accordance with what it believes to be true, be the consequences what they may, and that Error will never be perpetuated merely because of a craven apprehension that it is a more comfortable thing than Truth."

Edith did not at once reply, but sat with her gaze directed to the ground. When her eyes were again lifted to her companion's face it was with an inquiring look.

"May I ask, dear," she said, "if your distrust of Christianity began with your acquaintance with Mr. Desmond, or had you felt some doubts before?"

"I think of the two I was the earlier sceptic, Edith, my investigations having been promoted by the extraordinary commotion excited by the discussions that everywhere followed upon the promulgation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility.

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\* Goldwin Smith, with characteristic readiness to acknowledge consequences, has clearly recognized that the overthrow of the current theory of life is sure to result in the complete revolution of society. In a paper in the New York "Independent," on "Polemical and Propagandist Novels," he says: "Issues the most momentous are before the world. Man is brought face to face, as he never was before, with the awful problem of his being. It is a secondary consideration compared with spiritual truth, but one which is serious enough in its way, that the social fabric is not less in jeopardy than spiritual life, since nothing can be more certain than that society in Christian communities has hitherto been based upon religion." Such a chronicle as this we know that Mr. Smith (whose aversions are never concealed) does not like, although the chronicler strives to be as impartial as befits the task he has undertaken. Nevertheless,—despite the insults and derision of certain so-called Radicals who dislike his sturdy, old-fashioned patriotism,—the opinions of the Professor are valued by the best minds throughout the English-speaking world.

At any rate, I found that in some things my mind had preceded Mr. Desmond's, so much so that I was often able to suggest what books we should read in our subsequent investigations."

"Perhaps, dear," said Edith, "your absolute repudiation of religion may have been in some measure caused by the idea that in the most extreme rationalism there was the only logical antithesis to Romanism."

"By no means, Edith," returned Blanche, "I think that logic very shallow which insists that the mind can find no resting-place between what the world terms infidelity and Ultramontane Catholicism. On the contrary, I am quite assured that in your own Church the world possesses a form or system of Christianity much more akin to that established by the apostles of Jesus; yes, I am firmly convinced that the Anglican Church is wider, freer, purer, more all-embracing and all-appealing than any of its rivals,—or, as you would say, than either of its sister churches. Its historical claims are indefeasible, and if it were possible for my reason to assent to the claims made by and for the Founder of Christianity I should deem it my duty to become, like yourself, a member of the Church of England. I agree with Mr. Desmond that in your communion we behold individual piety and personal religion at their very highest and best; surely, my dear, you do not regard us as belonging to those fanatics whose devotion to reason is chiefly manifested in objurgating all that is most decidedly Christian? We are not professional unbelievers, Edith, endeavouring like cheap-Jacks to extol our own principles by disparaging and traducing those of others."

"I wish Dr. Hanaford could hear you say this, dear," remarked Edith, "for he is terribly zealous, and once or twice since I have been here he has tried to inveigle me into a discussion."

"Yes, I know," answered Blanche, "for he told Mr. Desmond that you were a beautiful Bigot. Fancy that, my dear; the doctor's failure to entrap you found expression in that alliteration. Mr. Desmond answered that he—Dr. Hanaford—had no drug in his dispensary that could so reconcile one to life as the reposeful faith that belonged to such bigotry as yours. And I think he chose an appropriate term, dear Edith, when he called your faith reposeful. You are absolutely free from the pessimism so common nowadays, I believe."

"If we can call Christ our Master upon earth and the Church our mistress, if we are willing to throw ourselves at His feet and to beg to be taught how we can lovingly, humbly, loyally serve our brethren for His sake, the hopelessness which causes pessimism will surely disappear. If we are to be sisters, dear," continued Edith, "may I not at times venture to direct your attention to the burden of the cross by means of which all other loads are lightened? But surely you are not at all a pessimist, dear? You are not yet quite recovered, and I think you are looking a little tired. You had better go to bed; dear, you must not tax yourself too much."

"No, I do not think that I am inclined to pessimism," said Blanche, "but there are times when I am perhaps unhealthily conscious of the vanity of human life, and when I could cry out with Job, 'The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more.' It is, I suppose, a morbid fancy springing from my recent illness, but, Edith dear, I sometimes think that I shall not live long. I do not know how it would be if I were really dying, but at present the thought of vanishing away from my dear husband and our baby is fraught with agony. And do you know, dear, I can see from Dr. Hanaford's manner that he thinks me very fragile?"

"Such thoughts will come when the nervous system has been debilitated, dear sister," answered Edith. "However, we must give you a change of scene without delay; you must not be suffered to become hypochondriacal. But you are very tired just now, so the best thing we can possibly do is to go to bed at once."

The next morning brought a letter from Mrs. Toynbee in which Edith was advised by her aunt to follow the dictates of her own judgment, and to consider especially if Lady Blanche were quite strong enough to undertake the responsibility of travelling without a lady companion. "There are no fears respecting yourself," wrote the good lady, "for I know your faith to be assured. Who can venture, however, to pronounce that your influence on the Desmonds may not be as I would fain have it prove?" Her resolution having thus been confirmed, Edith Allyn quietly but effectively undertook the superintendence of the various preparations, stimulated by a gentle hint from Dr. Hanaford that he hoped very much that Lady Blanche would benefit by a change that he regarded as a necessity.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## LOITERING, LISTENING, LEARNING.

OUR hero and his party were seated in a vine-wreathed bower or latticed arbour of the hotel-gardens directly overlooking the old town of Mentone. The gardens sloped almost abruptly down to the waters of the eastern bay, those waters which so faithfully mirror the warm blue sky above them. In all the world, I trow, there is no lovelier coast than this of the Riviera, a loveliness at once soft and majestic, balmy and invigorating. Very fragrant, too, was the air in this garden, where orange, lemon, palm, and heliotrope all contributed to gratify the senses of the lotus-eaters who throng hitherward every winter from climes less favoured,—from the damp, foggy island home of the great master-race, and from the far-extending region across the ocean where for more than a hundred years other children of that race have been conducting a great experiment and pressing onward, perchance to universal empire, as though determined to make a singularly unpropitious Nature attune itself to their will. Sheltered from the cold winds of the north by the giant ramparts of the Alpes Maritimes,—and indeed protected from every other wind that is baneful,—Blanche Desmond grew rapidly stronger, and now that winter was over she herself had proposed that before returning to England they should visit Florence and Rome, and perhaps Naples. There was but one more day remaining for their stay in Mentone, and this they had agreed to spend in an expedition across the Pont St. Louis, and to picnic a little distance beyond Mortola at a spot affording a full view of the eastern coast beyond Ventimiglia and to the point of sunny, palmy, gleaming Bordighera.

Hugh Desmond and his cousin the Squire, seated on campstools outside the arbour, had just lighted their cigars, when three gentlemen, two of whom had dined at the hotel that day, approached from the sea-wall at the bottom of the gardens. As they drew near, one of them,—whose dress indicated that he was a priest,—courteously saluted the cousins, his bow becoming much more profound when he caught sight of the ladies within the arbour. At the same moment a tall, thin man,—the middle one of the trio,—stepped up to our hero and said :

"Excuse me, sir, but I think we have met before. I felt convinced of that when I saw you at the table d'hôte, and for some time I cudgelled my poor brain to find out where I had seen you first. But now I recollect quite distinctly; it was in the smoking room of the Norwood hotel, London, last May. I hope you will pardon me for recalling so trivial a matter, but here among foreigners the sight of an English face that one remembers always excites one to dispense with formality."

"I remember the occasion quite well, I assure you, sir," replied Hugh, rising, "although I am afraid my memory for faces is not so good as your own. You were, I presume, a member of the party to which Mr. Euripides Cicero Funk and Mr. De Boggs belonged. You are an American, I think?"

"I was accidentally thrown among the party you mention, sir, that evening, but I lay no claim to the honour of membership in the Ethical Society of Chalcopolis. I am an American,—not of the aborigines, believe me,—but my name,"—and he presented his card,—“George Curtis Winthrop, is honest Anglo-Saxon, I think.”

"Indeed it is," answered our hero, "but will you allow me to say that I have now and then encountered Anglo-Saxons from beyond the Atlantic who appeared to think that their race was something almost new and distinct, and that political severance has long since abolished kinship?"

"No doubt, no doubt, sir," said Mr. Winthrop. "I too have known many Englishmen who have acted,—say, even when among us in America,—much as though it were presumptuous on our part to claim consanguinity. But we are English, sir, English to the core;—in nothing more so than in our ability to Americanize, that is, to Anglicise, all the discordant elements that stream within our ever-open gates. Britons, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Normans, were each and all, in your little island, grafted on to the leading stock; we are doing the same on a larger scale, but the result will be the same. We are transfusing the best blood of all the nations, and are preparing the way for the great confederation of English empires which is destined to encircle the world."

"A magnificent prospect, and I think a well-founded one," returned Hugh; "but I am afraid that I ought to apologize for my neglect to observe that this harbour is as much yours as mine. Pray be seated, gentlemen; I think we shall all be glad to waive ceremony."



By no means reluctant, the strangers, having courteously saluted the ladies, accepted the invitation, and in a few minutes the whole gathering began to feel as unrestrained as though they were each and all old acquaintances. The ecclesiastic belonged to Ventimiglia, where he occupied a position of some dignity among the regular clergy, and it soon appeared that he had also a distinct recollection of having seen Lady Blanche and Edith, whom he had encountered during one of their walks in the delightful Val-de-Mentone. The third gentleman was a Scotchman, a retired surgeon, whose name was familiar enough to Hugh Desmond, who at once discovered him to be a man whom he had long wished to meet. In and among what may be termed the professional clubs of London there lives an indeterminate, unsettled class, composed mainly of veterans of the army and navy, of the civil service, and of various other branches of public employment. Here you may meet men whose fathers were steady-going grocers, drapers, chandlers and coal-merchants in country towns,—men who would scorn to write letters on note-paper headed with any others crest than that of their club,—and the sons of younger sons whose careers, without being brilliant, have nevertheless been worthy of the ancient names they bore. Many of them have been shelved or superannuated in order that the promotion to which they were entitled might be given to others whose influence was greater; but the magnanimous old fellows, beyond an occasional growl among themselves, do not suffer their disappointment to become manifest. Probably there are more bachelors among these men than any other class much more numerous—unless devoted to celibacy—could show, the *rationale* of this being that, in the first place, their roving lives have seldom been conducive to matrimony; and, secondly, that their pensions would be woefully inadequate to the requirements of modern conjugal life. To this class belonged Dr. Fraser, the third stranger. In person he was tall and spare, having prominent cheek bones, rather square jaws and chin, and a very spare growth of sandy-gray side-whiskers. His light-gray eyes were, without being cunning, distrustful, and under the excitement of contradiction they fairly glistened with dogmatism and intolerance. Self-sufficiency was indicated, too, in the poise of the head; while the whole bearing of the man was such that, to use a nautical expression, he seemed to say, ‘If there is on board this ship a rope unknown to me, I will thank you to tell me where it is, sir.’



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The usual commonplaces having been spoken and the climate of the Riviera duly commended, Mr. Winthrop, turning to our hero, said: "Mr. Desmond, my friend Dr. Fraser tells me that you are a philosopher, that you are the author of a book which he has read with pleasure and admiration, and that reminds me that I have myself read many of your contributions to the magazines."

Hugh bowed, as in duty bound, but before he had time to acknowledge the compliment Dr. Fraser spoke for himself.

"I am very much interested in Mr. Desmond's writings," he said, "they indicate great power in the field of abstract thinking. I may add that I myself have spent many years in endeavouring to popularize a theory of life based upon similar data to those which Mr. Desmond has turned to such good account. I am not a literary man, however,—that is to say, not a literary artist,—so that I have had to depend much upon others to expound my thesis."

"That must be a very unsatisfactory method, I should think," observed Hugh, "unless, indeed, you have been fortunate enough to hit upon some expositor whom you could regard as your *alter ego* or double-ganger, a much more difficult person to discover even than one's absolute physical counterpart."

"Very true," said the other, "very true. I have, I may say, ransacked Grub Street from end to end, but I have never found a writer thoroughly competent to envisage my thesis. Popular writers and mere clever essayists and book makers want mental capacity to understand it, while the poor scribblers who, for a five-pound note or so, are willing to tackle it, are generally too hungry to be able to think."

In many respects this extraordinary man was an anomaly. He was a strong, if not original and lucid thinker, and he was fully entitled to boast,—which even in his most modest moments he seldom failed to do,—that he had virtually reconciled the assumed antinomies scientific and metaphysical, physical and psychical, by demonstrating that all the mental phenomena are somatic, organic functions, the necessarily material manifestations of a material energy. Being not an ill-natured man, he was nevertheless painfully cynical, and while apparently willing that his collaborators should receive due credit for their work with the many, in secret he laboured incessantly to convince clubmen, and the "celebrities" of

literature, science, and art, that he was the original thinker, the parent of the work done at his bidding by Grub Street hacks. Apart from this little vanity, by which his efforts and the dissemination of his principles were so frustrated and retarded, he was a pleasant companion, being not only well abreast of scientific discovery and invention, but being at the same time well read in the Humanities. While no one understood pathologically the so-called temperament of genius better than he did, it may be doubted whether any one would be disposed to judge it more severely. On the other hand, his essentially insular recognition of the over-balancing merits of rank, station and wealth might afford a fair excuse for much of the current prejudice against Materialism.

"Well, Dr. Fraser," returned Hugh, "I am glad to be able to thank you in person for what your philosophy has done for me. The little book of which you speak is the result of my application of your master-key, and I think you will find, if you honour me so far as to look into the preface of the book, that I have in some sort acknowledged my obligation to your most suggestive manual. Indeed, to tell the exact truth,—and if I am guilty of a breach of good manners I crave pardon beforehand,—there is a dear friend present who is carefully studying, not my book, but yours."

A slight blush mantled Edith Allyn's cheek as she said :

"If, as I infer, Mr. Fraser is the author of the treatise I am reading, I ought to thank him for his simplification of a principle that I have before now turned away from in something like despair as an esoteric transcendental hypothesis."

"Miss Allyn alludes to the doctrine of Relativity, which, now that she understands its bearings and import, is, I believe, considerably modifying her old opinions," said Hugh.

"I am flattered to learn that Miss Allyn thinks I have simplified anything, for I am only too conscious that by writing as I think,—and my thoughts are rather more German than English,—my meaning is generally somewhat obscure. But, Mr. Desmond, I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration of the skill and power with which you have, in your book, applied this Idealism as a solvent of all the supernaturalisms and superstitions of all ages, reducing them all to mere self-worship. Perhaps you do not sufficiently insist upon the absolute certainty that the ideating mind is nothing more than an outcome of matter, the inert crude matter of our pre-

scientific forefathers. You see,"—continued Dr. Fraser,—that I am very dogmatic, but I am necessarily so. We stand upon a rock when we are enabled to grasp this autostatic or hylō-idealistic thesis; yea, Father Sistori, upon a rock stronger than that of Peter, I assure you."

Thus addressed, the priest bowed to the ladies, and said with a smile and in good English:

"I have long known that the English ladies, like the German mothers of whom Tacitus wrote, share the studies and speculations of their husbands and brothers. It is not so with us of the Latin races. We are more emotional, and for us a religion, and that a strongly, vividly emotional one, is a necessity. I have seen English and American ladies prostrate themselves before the Host; I have also seen pilgrims from both countries in St. Peter's at Rome; but, *corpo di Bacco!* the Alps are not colder than they are before a holy image. You have, signora,"—here the Abbate addressed Lady Blanche,—“you have seen some of our village fêtes here in our mountain slopes? Yes, I thought so; and you have therefore observed the devotion of our simple Ligurians to the tawdry wooden heroes and heroines of the processions. It is absurd, you say, irrational; I know it is, but Apollo and Venus, can we restore them, or the nature-worship of which they were emblems? It is false, perhaps? well, what then, if the illusion is satisfactory, if it render life and its hardships more tolerable? Look at the poor workers in your own cities: *corpo di Bacco!* you have taken away their old religion, and your social system can only be typified by *un effort d'imagination*,—let us say by a picture of law and order as two wet blankets spread over Vesuvius and pinned down by bayonets."

"Trying to smother a volcano, eh, Abbate?" said Mr. Winthrop, "a much better figure, by the way, Dr. Fraser, than our hackneyed one of Dame Partington and her broom."

"To smother a volcano, indeed yes," returned the priest. "My brother, the Cardinal, was at the Vatican Council, and I have published his notes, of course, under a *nom de plume*. He was struck by the terrible earnestness of the Germans and of the English, whether they belonged to the *placets* or *non-placets*, on the Infallibility question. *Corpo di San Gennaro!* of course they were earnest; Luther was earnest, Balaam, Zwingle, Calvin,—my faith, Calvin!—these were all earnest

to the death. Their ancestors were also in earnest, as the Gallic merchants reported to Cæsar, and in battle their eyes shot forth lightning and their faces were terrible,—*as vultum quidem atque aciem oculorum ferre potuisse*,\*—because they were mad. The English are insane; the country between the Weser and the Rhine emits maddening gases from the soil. The modern Prussians are the maddest of all, so mad that they would commit suicide rather than acknowledge that there is one unfathomable mystery in the universe. *Corpo di Bacco!* they are infecting the world, all but the Latin part of it, which continues to take things easy and to leave the unknown to God. See the beautiful Mediterranean there before us, and how that selucca and her quill-like yards are transmuted to silver by the rising moon. Surely it is all most charming,—to be felt rather than expounded or analysed."

"True, Signor Abbate," said our hero, "it is very lovely, but only with the beauty of the reflecting and creating mind of man without which it were nothing."

"True, signore," replied the other, "I quite understand that, but such a thought is only for the few, not for the many."

"Indeed, I think so," observed Mr. Winthrop, "for it seems to me that universal idealism would shut up every faculty and put an end to all systematic exertion."

"I think that most of us are too ready to accept the opinions of supposed authorities," said Lady Blanche. "'Ask of the learned the way: the learned are blind.' The so-called Realists always seem unable to recognize that idealism is not a mere negation of the evidence of the senses. Yet the main object of the author of the 'Principles of Human Knowledge' was to substantiate the revelation of the senses. Perhaps Mr. Winthrop has not studied Berkeley?"

"I confess with regret that I have hitherto neglected him," was the answer, "although I have read a great deal of the writings of the Common-Sense school."

"A school fittingly presided over by a *baral* punskull whose aversion to the greatest and simplest of truths impelled him to write 'I despise Philosophy and renounce its guidance,'" growled Dr. Fraser. "He seems to have been the victim of some cerebral defect in this particular. And so this

\* "That even their countenances and the sharpness of their eyes it was not possible to endure."—Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, 1, 39.

lady," she said, turning toward Edith, "I am reading my little manual, eh? May I venture to ask her to look over its defects of expression? Mine has been a busy life, spent in every quarter of the globe where the British ensign floats, and I have had but little leisure to do more than study men." "I have found your book most suggestive," Dr. Fraser said to Edith, "and it has done much to make me more confident with regard to my own opinions. Some of your remarks, especially your method of explaining the conversion of St. Paul, struck me. I think, as being too subtle, shall I say positive? and I could not help thinking that your eagerness to prove that the apostle was struck when approaching Damascus indicated that you realized the necessity imposed on unbelievers of furnishing a natural explanation of a most extraordinary occurrence." "There is little doubt that Edith's criticism would have drawn forth a neologistic dissertation had not Tim Darragh just then appeared with the information that the boat was at the stairs and that Madeleine, with the ladies' wraps, had already gone on board. Cousin Maurice, having explained that they had appointed this evening for their last sail around the Cape, politely extended an invitation to their new friends, which was at once accepted, and in a few minutes the whole party was afloat on the blue water. It was a most delightful excursion; the gentle breeze impelling the boat almost imperceptibly forward along the silvery track of the crescent moon and the brilliant vespers star that claimed with our satellite the dominion of the heavens. Hugh Deaslond, his cousin, the ecclesiastic, and Mr. Winthrop were forward; the priest eloquently controverting certain assumptions of the American Father histori spoke English extremely well, and he stated his case like a man of the world rather than a churchman, drawing a painful picture of an over-taxed people drained of their life-blood to support an oppressive militarism. Toward the stern of the boat Blanche and Edith stood silently admiring the beauties of the evening when Dr. Fraser approached them and said, "I have taken the liberty of asking your maid to bring your wraps. One must be careful on the Riviera to guard against the sudden fall in temperature after sunset." "Thank you," said Blanche, as she threw the warm shawl



over her head and shoulders, "it is very thoughtful of you to remind us. See, they are putting the boat on the other tack to return, and now we have the moon ahead, as sailors say. Did you ever see anything more beautiful? I think I shall never forget it."

"And how peaceful it is, dear," returned Edith, "how insignificant and trivial is all our philosophy of unrest in the calm of so great heavenly beauty and radiance."

"Not trivial or insignificant, I think," said Dr. Fraser, "when we reflect upon the fact that all this beauty and radiance are in ourselves, created by us. There is no unrest in the mind that is anchored to the rock I spoke of this evening, in the mind that is willing to recognize its oneness with all other matter. You know that Carlyle, the inventor of the phrase 'the philosophy of dirt,' is reported to have once turned his eyes from the starry firmament, calling it a miserable sight. We are compelled to make our own egoity the standard of all things, because the human mind is the genitor and progenitor of all things, whether transcendental or sordid and degrading,—as the poet puts it, it can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven. On such an occasion as this the idea of an omnipresent God is strong within us, while in winter on the wide ocean or among barren mountains I have just as often experienced atheistic emotions. The vesture or raiment of Nature is wholly of our own making, and if we once realize this in its fulness we shall surely arrive at complete harmony in ourselves."

"There is, Dr. Fraser, something awesome in what you say," answered Edith. "Without affirming or denying a Supreme Intelligence, you yet speak as though each one of us were his or her own God."

"Yes, Miss Allyn, that is so," said the doctor, "for weal or woe, that is so. I am not sorry to hear you characterize the affirmation as awesome, for it tends to confirm my conviction,—if confirmation were necessary,—that in the universal recognition of this ultimate truth mankind will yet discover its way to the highest happiness, the *summum bonum*."

"I have long felt something like this," said Lady Blanche, "and Mr. Desmond will tell you, Doctor Fraser, that he is, and has been for some time, one of your disciples. Yonder abbé may after all be mistaken in supposing that, because his church's doctrines can reconcile Ligurian peasants to ignor-



ance and misery, they will never lose their authority. I am convinced that the principles you have formulated are capable of inspiring mankind and of securing progress in all good, and that they will be universally recognized long after supernatural religion and that erroneous humanitarian religion which plagiarizes its extravagancies have been rejected by enlightened reason. Unless I am much mistaken, my dear friend also will long remember our last days at Mentone. Edith dear, it would not surprise me to find you after all numbered among the philosophers."

The next day Dr. Fraser and Mr. Winthrop accompanied the Desmonds to Mortola, and there, with a landscape of unsurpassable loveliness stretched below and around, our hero and his friends and relatives "loafed" away the pleasant hours. The priest had gone to Monaco early that morning, for, as Mr. Winthrop said, "he was a busy man, his world-experience being a sure guarantee that he would die a cardinal."

"World-experience?" inquired Lady Blanche, "has he then travelled far beyond his own country?"

"Indeed he has," was the reply, "I have met him in Boston, Washington, and other American cities, and he seems to know England well. He is most active agent of a power that never tires or sleeps, a power that many thoughtful persons in my country are beginning to dread."

"You mean what we call Ultramontaniam," said Hugh; "is it possible that you are already beginning to find it a peril to your institutions?"

"It must always be inimical to what you would perhaps term the Anglo-Saxon idea, Mr. Desmond, I think," answered Mr. Winthrop. "In New England, the very home of Puritanism, it is fast attaining ascendancy; it has begun to menace our public school system which Macaulay praised the first colonists for establishing on so broad a foundation. In convent-schools, hospitals, and elsewhere it steadfastly pursues its schemes of proselytizing, and it has become a factor to be weighed and conciliated in the politics of the country. What it has lost in Europe it has more than compensated itself for across the ocean. Both in America and in the embryonic empires of Australasia it makes its specious appeal to those whom the various Protestant sects have neglected, so that while asking the classes to regard it as the buttress of privilege and



convinced that his excessive devotion of superstition is the cause of the evil."

"Lost his reason!" said Hugh, "can it be possible? I see from your looks that it is but too true; but surely there is hope of recovery!"

"I called to see him about a month after your last visit to town," replied Wiltshire, "because I had not seen him for about a fortnight. Well, my friend, I found him sitting in

an arm-chair, with a commissionaire stationed behind him; and I may as well state my conviction that in all my travels I never cast eyes on anything so awful. Mrs. Curtin, whom I met on the stairs, in some degree prepared me, giving me to understand that her husband was delirious. But bless my

soul! delirium is surely too mild a term for what I found in this case. He was fully dressed except that he wore neither collar nor neckcloth, and he knew me immediately. His eyes, however, were rolling in a frightful manner, and when for a moment he looked straight at me,—I cannot attempt to describe the furtive glances he was throwing everywhere,—

there was a terrible light in them. How are you, Wiltshire?" he shouted, "the best friend I have in the world, but a Protestant. God bless you, Wiltshire!"

I advanced to shake hands with him, when I perceived that he held in his right hand one of those old-fashioned yellow walkingsticks with gnarled knots and twistings in them, a stick almost as thick as my wrist. I suppose I turned pale,—by heaven, Mr. Desmond, I could not have helped it!—for Curtin looked at me

and laughed the most blood-curdling laugh I ever heard. I did not stay very long, but I found another commissionaire outside the parlour, and he assured me that they would soon find means to withdraw the walkingstick from him. I was given to understand that the Taintors, Mr. Walter, and others were behaving very liberally. I called again a week or so after, but only to find that William had been removed to an

asylum and that his wife had taken another lodging.

"This is very sad," said Desmond, "but I must acknowledge that it does not astonish so much as it grieves me. I recognized long ago that our friend was exposed to

"To insanity," interrupted the other, "or to what the mad-doctors term religious mania or exaltation. Yes, he was, and I am beginning to realize that in all probability the most renowned saints,—prophets, hermits, and all the lot of them, in-

cluding inquisitors like Torquemada and Salvation Army howlers,—have had, as the Scotch say, a bee in their bonnets."

"You are on the way to a discovery of greater importance than you can, perhaps, at the present moment quite understand, Mr. Wiltshire," observed Desmond, "a discovery which will enable you to understand and account for the most extravagant pretensions of megalomaniacs and religious founders. So you have heard nothing more concerning William, I suppose?"

"Let me tell you," said Wiltshire. "About a month before Christmas I was going along the Strand on my way to dinner. Being pretty sharp set, I kept on the side of the big hoarding of the new law courts; for, you know, whenever you meet a fellow in the Strand it is always on the other side—the left hand as you leave the City. When I was passing the church and crossing the road to the Row—you know, Holywell Street?—I ran almost into the arms of William Curtin. I was never more surprised in my life, so much so that I quite forgot my dinner. We kept together all the afternoon, and at length brought up in the office of that old crony of yours, Joseph Taintor. Up to that moment William appeared perfectly sane, until Taintor asked him a question regarding the asylum. In an instant his manner changed, and he said, 'Oh, they were very good to me there; but at night they used to open a trap-door at the side of my bed, and down at the bottom the black river was flowing, and sure then would come along the archbishop in full pontificals, and a glorious procession with the Blessed Sacrament under a canopy. Sure,' he continued, 'it was all done to cure me, I know that now; but it was wonderful to see the archbishop gliding along over the water.' Taintor and I exchanged glances, but we did not attempt to contradict or correct the strange idea. William would not suffer us to accompany him home, and we dared not follow him. Well, the long and the short of the story is, that within another week he was declared to be raving mad, and was removed to another asylum. What else could be expected when he was suffered so soon to betake himself to reporting sermons and subjected to the mummary that had in the first place overbalanced his reason?"

"Have you heard anything of him since?" asked Desmond, "or have you seen any of the family, his wife or sister?"

"The sister is married, I think," answered Wiltshire, "and

Mrs. Curtin has returned to her mother's, but in what district is more than I can tell. It is a sad story, isn't it?"

Mr. Toynbee, who had listened attentively to Wiltshire's narration, now interposed.

"May I inquire, Mr. Wiltshire," he asked, "to what particular portion of the services, the religious, the devotional services, of the Roman Church you allude under the elegant term of 'mummery,' which you seem also to hold responsible for your friend's mental aberration?"

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Toynbee," said Wiltshire. "I meant the mass, which I consider the most mind-ennervating form of worship ever practised among men. The idea of God being present in and represented by a gummy wafer or bit of bread, and of his being eaten by costermongers and Irish dock-labourers after a few minutes spent by them in confession in a box the previous afternoon! What is it that Madame Roland says of this horrible doctrine?"

"I know nothing of Madame Roland, sir," answered Mr. Toynbee very warmly, "but I do know that the doctrine you ridicule is as much that of the Church of England,—of course with some distinctions,—as it is that of the Church of Rome. I will go so far as to say that its denial is, in my opinion, a heresy and a sin but little if at all short of infidelity."

Of the discussion that ensued I will say but little. According to custom when Christians engage in controversies of this nature, it became somewhat acrimonious, and it may be doubted whether any or all of the previous logomachies of these two neighbours ever separated them so widely. Our hero succeeded in preventing an open rupture only with considerable difficulty, and then only by asking a simple question which the schoolmaster seemed quite unable to answer.

"You believe, I think, Mr. Toynbee," he said, "that God is everywhere,—that he is, as we say, omnipresent?"

"Of course I do, Mr. Desmond," was the reply; "to doubt it would be blasphemy."

"In that case, it seems to me," said Hugh, "that there can be no special claim put forward for the eucharistic bread and wine, any more than, if we are all the sons of God, any one man that ever trod the earth can claim a nearer relationship to the Deity than we ourselves."

Mr. Toynbee muttered something about metaphysical subtleties and quibbling, but during the remainder of the evening



he seemed somewhat moody and ill at ease, and for the rest of his stay at Wanstead Hall our hero found his old friend less combative than usual.

Soon after Hugh's return to Carrig Desmond, Tim Darragh,—whose superior qualifications as a traveller and man of the world even Johnston, the minister's man, was now fain to acknowledge,—made up his mind to try his powers of persuasion upon pretty Katie Conroy. He was altogether successful in his suit, and it is to be presumed that in dealing with her father Tim was able to demonstrate that he was by no means a bad match, for the old gentleman, having heard Tim's statement of his position and prospects, placed his daughter's hand in that of her suitor and discreetly retreated to the garden to smoke his evening pipe. As he drew the kitchen door to behind him, his ear caught a sound somewhat suggestive of that made when a zealous butcher throws a juicy beefsteak on the marble slab of his counter. There was profound silence for a few seconds, broken at last by Katie's saying: "For shame, Mr. Darragh,—Tim, I mean! sure them's your foreign manners, no doubt, picked up from consorting with Frenchers. If you do it again I will run away, I declare,—well, you may take another, but only one, mind."

Maurice Desmond and his cousin devoted some days to the accounts connected with the estate, and found them in a very unsatisfactory condition. In consultation with their neighbour Mr. Burke, they learned that there had been no outrage of any kind since the death of Shine, but many of the tenants on both estates continued to protest their inability to pay their rents. Much of the Knockmore and Cator land went untilled, for since the evictions no one had asked to occupy the vacant holdings.

"The people, Maurice," said Mr. Burke, "are not able to attend peaceably to their own business. There is no moonlighting that I know of, but the spirit of anti-landlordism is everywhere at work undermining the whole fabric into which we were born and which we thought was to endure for ever. We have been,—I mean the untitled gentry have been, the bulwark and safeguard of England's authority in Ireland, and with all our shortcomings,—and I am fully aware that our great-grandfathers were intolerant fanatics,—yet with all our



shortcomings we have kept alive the great principles brought to life by the Reformation. Our loyalty to these and to England is unquestionable; for Irishmen though we are, we would die in the last trench rather than favour a movement of reaction which would inevitably entrust power to those who will assuredly exert it in favour of the worst of all possible despotisms. You know I am not an Orangeman; there is nothing fanatical about me; and I assure you that there are many Roman Catholics among the gentry, yes, many of your own church, who dread the consequences of contending the destinies of Ireland to a mob of mental serfs."

"Do not say of any church, old friend," interposed Maurice, "for, thanks to my cousin here, I have long been able to dispense with churches and their sacraments and never feel the loss."

"True, I had forgotten that you belong to the philosophers; perhaps at bottom we are not so very wide apart after all; but let that pass," continued Mr. Burke. "However, you see how it is; we are on the brink of a social earthquake and God only knows to what we may not come now; that party strife is becoming so keen across the channel. There is that tenant of yours, Murphy, has been lecturing in Coolreeagh and in Liscarra, and he is but one of many who are going about preparing the way, like so many Catalines or Gracchus, for what they call an agrarian revolution."

"The fellow owes two years' rent, and he has the best land in the barony," said Maurice angrily. "Father Tom spoke of him to me, and I have authorized Moran to get rid of him at any cost."

"Take care what you do," said Mr. Burke; "the fellow is very influential; you had better try fair means first." "I have talked with him to no purpose," said Hugh. "He pleads poverty, and the place is a wilderness through his neglect. He is as glib as a lawyer, but I do not feel called upon to make him virtually free of my best land."

The reader will, perhaps, not have forgotten that Tim Darragh once spoke of the Desmond, as being stubborn as rocks. In this case the Cataline of the district soon found reason to echo the sentiment, but there could be no question that the Squire, in justice to himself, was acting within his rights. Matt Murphy was compelled to bow before the law, and in due course of time—that is to say, soon after Edith

Allyn rejoined her friends at the old castle,—this apostle of the new agrarian light quietly enough left the farm. As Maurice had said, both house and land had become a disgrace to the whole estate, so no one was disposed to wonder when a corps of masons and carpenters were set to work to thoroughly renovate the cottage. When this task was completed, it soon became generally known that Tim Darragh was to be the Squire's new tenant, and as the honest fellow was a general favourite nobody seemed to envy him his good fortune.

The day before that appointed for the wedding found the Squire deep in business. His man of law, Mr. Kirwan, was in attendance, and, except at lunch, these gentlemen were confined to the library during the long summer day. Blanche, Edith, and our hero had driven to Knockmore in the morning, and they were absent when Father Cahill and young Dick Furlong drove up to the castle in the priest's jaunting-car.

"You are a good whip, Dick, my lad," said Father Tom, as he jumped from the car, "but you are not acquainted with Molly Bawn. Her mouth is very tender, very tender, and you saw how she rears when you rein her in too suddenly. Faith, Dick, if you ever live to be married, take my word for it, you will do well to manage your wife on the same principle as that demanded by Molly. Never rein them in too suddenly, avic, for if ye do ye will maybe live to repent it."

"I shall never be married, I think, Father Cahill," replied Dick, with something like a sigh, "although I think I was intended by Providence for a family man."

"In that case, Dick, ye will as surely be married as that a duckling will take to the water: sure all the world knows that you might cut out that spalpeen Cator if you would summon up courage to try."

"Indeed, then, Father Tom, but it's trying to do that I am all the time; but I am so shy in her presence that, ye see, I am always at a disadvantage."

"Because you have not enough of the devil in ye, Dick, my lad. I tell you that the girls like a man with a spice of the devil in him. However, there is Dan waiting for us at the hall door; arrah, Dan, *ma bouchal*, God save ye kindly!"

When, his day's work over, Maurice Desmond sat at his own board surrounded by those who loved and honoured him, it was evident that he was gratified by the result of his devotion to business. Mr. Kirwan, who was to go back to Oodreagh

in the morning,—also looked extremely good-natured and radiant.

"Well, Miss Allyn," said the Squire, "now that you have seen Miss Burke again, tell me if you like her. Something of an Amazon, is she, eh?"

"Take care, Maurice, take care!" said the administrator; "by the powers, man, you are after forgetting that Mr. Furlong is as ready to break a lance in that lady's cause as was that madman of Sir Walter's,—what d'ye call him? Count Robert of Paris,—to murder a thousand or so Byzantines in his wife's quarrel."

Dick Furlong coloured a little at this allusion to himself, but the Squire continued to address Edith.

"Of course, I do not mean that she is not all that is kind and good and gentle,—she is an Irish lady, and that, I take it, includes and expresses everything praiseworthy in woman; but she is of a different type to your own, Miss Allyn."

"Yes, I suppose she is," answered Edith, "but you know the proverb about extremes. Miss Burke is, I am convinced, capable of as much self-devotion as were those noble women who carried a higher religion and a better civilization from Ireland to Britain in the olden time."

"I believe you are right, Miss Allyn," said Father Tom, bowing, while Furlong looked gratefully at the lady,—"yes, Miss Burke is as compassionate as she is generous and high-spirited."

"You have been very busy, cousin Maurice, to-day," said Blanche; "to-morrow you must go with us to the Leaba Righ, where Hugh was held captive, you know."

"Have you not forgotten Darragh's wedding, my love?" inquired our hero.

"Indeed, I am ashamed to confess that I had for the moment," returned Blanche, "but our cousin has shown himself such an exemplary worker of late that I am eager to entice him out of doors."

"Well, my dear," said Maurice, "I think I may say that my work is over. Were I to die to-morrow my affairs would be found in perfect order; eh, do you not think so, Kirwan, my friend?"

"In perfect order, Squire," returned the lawyer, "perfect order, as every man's should be. It is a duty one owes to oneself and to society."

"So that I shall now be able to devote myself, a faithful squire of dames, to your pleasure, my dear, and to that of Miss Allyn," continued the old gentleman. "But Tim's marriage over, we will begin with the Leaba Righ; and what do you say to inviting the Burkes? Dick, my lad, you will come, I know, and Father Tom I am always sure of when there's any fun to be had."

Father Tom and his companion had left Carrig Desmond about an hour, when Tim Darragh sent in to ask the favour of a brief audience in the drawing-room, and almost as soon as old Dan retired with an order to show him in, Tim, accompanied by Mr. Conroy, the schoolmaster, and a very old man, whose white hair hung below his shoulders, entered the room. Hugh Desmond at once recognized in this old man the Baccach, or travelling minstrel, Morgan Mannion. The old fellow upon entering began a series of profound bows or obeisances, which included all who were present in the courtesy which they were designed to convey.

"So, Tim," said the Squire, "you and Mr. Conroy are come to invite us to the wedding, I suppose?"

"That is so, your honour; you, the young master, my lady, Miss Allyn, and any ye may like to bring. The housewarming and, what is the word, Mr. Conroy? arrah, that's it,—reception will begin at six o'clock, and if we might make so bould we would,—sure, Mr. Conroy is a schoolmaster, and I think I will l'ave him to do the talking."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Conroy, in much the same manner as lecturers address their audiences, "the young couple who are to be united in matrimony by Father Cahill to-morrow, and toward whose establishment in life you have contributed so generously and nobly, venture to hope that you will honour their cottage in the evening by your presence."

"Present our thanks to the young couple, if you please, Mr. Conroy," answered Blanche, "and state that we all intend to avail ourselves of the kind invitation."

Strict etiquette probably demanded of Mr. Darragh rather a reserved and constrained demeanour on this occasion, he being, perhaps somewhat anomalously, in the position of acting as his own ambassador. Tim, however, when animated, was not accustomed to suppress or restrain himself, so stepping farther into the room he addressed our hero, his late master, thus:

"Your honour has, I think, reason to remember Morgan Mannion, the ould shaughrah or stray-man. At all events, Mr. Desmond Morgan says he has good cause to remember you, for he says that your honour kem' nigh to strangling him up there'da the mountains."

"I remember him well enough, Tim," said Hugh; "I see he is not afraid to trust himself among us, although he is now well known to have kept bad company."

"Bedad, my lady," cried Tim, addressing himself to Blanche, "there is no such a Baccach in Ireland. He is the prince of story-tellers, and as for singing, sure, he beats Banagher ayther in Irish or in English, my lady. With your gracious permission, my lady, Katie says she would like the poor shaughrah to help us with the festivities to-morrow, but not if it is likely to prove objectionable to yourself or the young masters."

"Why, of course he is not, Darragh," said Blanche, and stepping forward she offered her hand to the old wanderer, who, bending his fine old head with the courtesy of a prince, saluted it with his lips. The Squire in the meantime had left the room, and on his return was followed by old Dan, the housekeeper, and a servant bearing a salver of cake and a couple of decanters.

"On this, the last night of your bachelorhood, Tim, my boy," said Maudie, "we will wish you and your bright little colleen a long and a happy life together. Faithful once, faithful ever, Tim; I am confident that you will do well."

"Thank you, Squire!" said the honest fellow in reply, "sure we will try to do so anyway." They all drank the toast proposed by Maudie, drank it so cordially that Tim's eyes, though sparkling with pleasure, were also moist with tears. Knowing well the character of the shaughrah, the Squire insisted that he should drink a bumper "to the house," and nothing loth the old fellow complied. This feast accorded the sun shone brightly on the morrow when Timothy Darragh and Kathleen Conroy became man and wife. The popularity of both bride and bridegroom in and around Inniscarra was evidenced by the numerous wedding feasts to be seen on all sides, while from various places in the village flags were seen floating on the breeze. Every body, too, seemed to know of the reception to be held in the evening, and to know also that some of the gentry of the district would be there.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

ILLUSTRATING SOME RECENT CHAPTERS OF IRISH HISTORY.

MRS. Kathleen Darragh,—*born* Conroy, as the organs of funkeyism would express it, only in French,—was so busy that she might almost have been excused had she now and then in the course of the evening retired, like Jephthah's daughter, to bewail her virginity. However much the ordinary bridegroom might on such an occasion be disposed to condemn so great exertion, as being likely to fatigue and enervate, and as being therefore conducive to apathy later on at a most inopportune moment,—Mr. Darragh manifested no such disposition. On the contrary, honest Tim ably and unflinchingly seconded his wife and her auxiliaries, while Mr. Conroy,—who had often heard his own father describe the old feasts and merry-makings, where both landlord and tenant exerted themselves to please,—was a host in his own proper person. There were two fiddlers whose reputation as “elbow-shakers” extended throughout the county, the one being stationed on a sort of rostrum in the large kitchen or general room of the cottage, the other being similarly honoured in the barn. When all the aunts, uncles, cousins, and cousins-german of both the parties to the union were assembled, together with their friends, there was absolutely no room for standing left in the cottage. This contingency had, however, been foreseen and provided for by the schoolmaster. The large out-building, recently floored, painted, and plastered, was prepared for dancing, while the kitchen was set apart for refreshments, card-playing, and other amusements. In the “front-room,” or parlour, where the wedding presents were displayed, seats had been reserved for the “quality,”—that is, for such of them who might during the evening desire a temporary retreat from the crowd.

Besides the party from Carrig Desmond,—including Mrs. Condon and Dan the butler,—there were Father Tom and his curates, one of whom had recently taken the place of Father O'Ruarc, Dick Furlong, Mr. Tyacke, two police sergeants, and a number of shopkeepers and tradesmen from the village. The dancing had already begun when the Honourable Ulick Burke and his daughter were announced and introduced to the happy

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couple, and shortly after Mr. Burke led forth the blushing bride as his partner,—perhaps we should say competitor,—in an old-fashioned Irish dance. To him, after a brief interval, succeeded the Squire of Carrig Desmond, and soon thereafter Eva Burke, Dick Furlong, and all the rest of them were responding *con amore* to the magnetic influence of the fiddle. Very little persuasion was necessary to induce Edith Allyn to participate with Lady Blanche in a figure dance later on, and even our hero, who knew nothing of dancing, showed himself, as he said, perfectly willing to exhibit his ignorance in honour of the occasion.

"Dear me, Maurice," said Mr. Burke to his old friend when they subsequently met in the cottage, "I did not think I was so old as I find I am. A day's ride across country would not make me half so tired, I think; I shall be devilish sore to-morrow, I know; but Tim is a fine boy, a good boy. It reminds me of old times, Maurice, of the days when we were boys, and when landlords and tenants were not as they now are. How we have gone to the bad since the freeholders were sacrificed! and there is worse to come, old friend, worse to come."

"I fear so, Ulick," returned Maurice. "Come into the little room yonder, and I will show you something that none of my name or race ever before saw the like of."

Somewhat surprised, Mr. Burke followed the Squire into the parlour, which was untenanted, and Maurice took from his pocket a small envelope and taking therefrom a half-sheet of note-paper put it into his neighbour's hand. It contained no writing or message of any kind, but a rough delineation of a coffin and a skull and crossbones extended nearly the whole length of the paper.

"It came by the morning's post," explained the Squire, "no doubt from the man Murphy. There is absolutely no other man in Ireland that owes me a grudge or that has any reason for feeling bitter against me."

"I have no doubt that your surmise is correct," said Mr. Burke, "the dodge is now so vulgar that it must not trouble you. You know how many of these things I have seen in my time. But this Murphy is a morose, revengeful man, and you may as well be on your guard against him. At any rate, we will show this to Tyacke, so that the man's movements may be watched."

"It is scarcely worth while, I think," said Maurice: "it is, of course, only a trick to annoy me. Murphy knows how lenient I was to him, and that so long as there existed the least reason to hope that he would act justly both toward himself and to me I never interfered except to advise him."

"All the same, we will show this thing to Tyacke, my friend: it will never do to allow it to go unnoticed. As I have often told you, lawlessness always grows bolder when suffered to pass unchecked. Quietness is sure to be taken for timidity, it always is; yes, we will show this to Tyacke at once."

"Before we do that, Burke, let me say that I desire this matter should be kept strictly to ourselves, to us three alone. Though he cannot annoy me, the scoundrel probably reckons on terrifying Lady Blanche and her friend, and perhaps on their anxiety leading them to request me to leave home for a time. But he shall not be gratified, he shall not be gratified, and then in his disappointment he may show his hand a little plainer."

"Never fear," replied Mr. Burke, "it shall be kept a secret, until we can find this skulking disciple of Paddy Shine a little off his guard. Then it will be our turn. Now let us find Tyacke."

The district-inspector was not far off, being in fact in the next room with one of the sergeants doing his utmost toward gratifying the hospitable intention of Mr. Timothy Darragh. As the two gentlemen entered the kitchen, the sergeant whispered to his superior, who, rising from his seat, saluted the magistrates and, placing chairs for them, bestowed a hearty exordium on the cold punch. In addition to the many guests of whom it is not libellous to say that they were born thirsty, there were others whom exercise had rendered so, and these continued to enter and retire from the room, sometimes in groups or couples, and sometimes, but very seldom, one by one. Of course it was impossible to broach the subject of the implied threat under such circumstances, and on the other hand there were those present whose native keenness would have engendered a rumour were Mr. Tyacke to be suddenly called from the house. Moreover, the old neighbours were themselves undoubtedly thirsty, and otherwise well disposed to watch with a favouring smile the progress of the fragrant concoction which the bride was, with her own plump hands,

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preparing for their benefit. Scarcely had this been set before them when Lady Blanche, Edith, and Miss Burke, attended by Hugh Desmond and the ever-faithful Dick, passed through into the parlour, whence the two gentlemen soon after emerged in quest of some refreshment for the ladies. While old Des, with ready corkscrew, was drawing the cork from a bottle of wine, our hero, approaching the district-inspector, said:

"I think we ought to congratulate ourselves, Mr. Tyacke, on the general quietude of this part of the country. Carlow always had a good reputation, which the machinations of Shine and his gang have not seriously impaired, I think."

"Very true, Mr. Desmond. There is no cleaner county in Ireland, but the Lord only knows where this disaffection will end. But will you not sit down with us and drink to the prosperity of Mr. and Mrs. Darragh?"

"If you will be good enough to excuse me for a moment, I will do so with pleasure," replied Hugh, turning to receive the tray which Tim was bringing toward him. On his return from the parlour, he found Father Tom and the curates, occupying the seats where his cousin, Mr. Burke and the inspector had been sitting, and he learned with some surprise that the clergymen had seen the three others walking off toward the road.

"I came here," said Hugh, "to drink Tim's health on Tyacke's invitation, but since he seems to have forgotten it, perhaps you will let me do so with you, Father Cahill."

"You know what the book says against being joined to unbelievers, Hugh, my boy," returned the administrator with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, "but, faith, there is no man in Ireland whom I would sooner join with in that than yourself. Tim, you rascal, bring the punch; we are going to wish you health and a big family, and the young master is to propose the *slanthea gal*!"

Meanwhile, Mr. Tyacke was lending an attentive ear to the statement of Maurice Desmond, — or rather of Mr. Burke, for that impetuous gentleman, as usual, did most of the talking. The inspector, having been entrusted with the threatening paper, undertook that Matt Murphy and his doings should be carefully observed.

"Between ourselves," he said, "this man has long been under suspicion, and will bear watching. If the truth were

Anglice, was-a-hael, — bright or good health.

known, the mantle of Pat Shine has fallen upon him. Yes, he shall be looked after, I assure you."

Returning to the house, they were just in time to hear the conclusion of our hero's speech made in proposing the health of the bride and bridegroom. Father Cahill led off the cheering, the toast was made general and drunk by all standing, and then the carriages of the "quality" and a few cars from Inniscarra drew up at the door. It was well understood that by far the larger portion of the guests would remain much longer than was good for them,—such is the custom,—but, at any rate, their clergy and the gentlefolks held up a good example for them to follow if they chose to do so.

The first to leave were the cars bound for Inniscarra, among them Father Cahill's and that of Mr. Tyacke. In order that Mrs. Condon and Dan might be accommodated in the carriage, our hero requested the administrator to give him a seat on his car. They left the farm slightly in advance of the policemen, while Furlong, who was on horseback, lingered behind awaiting the carriages from Knockmore and Carrig Desmond. For about an Irish mile they would travel on the same road, and Miss Burke proposed that Miss Allyn should occupy a seat in the carriage beside her until they reached the cross-roads, a proposal to which Edith, out of consideration toward the Squire's horses, gladly assented. It was a beautiful moonlight night, harmonizing exactly with the temper and disposition of Mr. Richard Furlong, who knew well that he appeared to great advantage on the back of his favourite hunter with his riding cloak hanging cavalierly from his shoulders.

"If we put you down at the foot of the hill," said Father Tom to our hero, "you will be satisfied, I suppose. Here is Father Clancy, who will be after celebrating at first mass in the morning, and for his sake we must be home before midnight."

"Thank you, yes," said Hugh, "that will do; I assure you I am quite able to walk up the hill to the house."

"I am almost resolved to go with you," said the administrator, "for, to tell you the truth, my boy, your cousin Maurice, I am convinced, has some trouble on his mind."

"Trouble?" inquired Hugh, in astonishment; "nonsense, Father Tom. His affairs are in perfect order,—you yourself heard him say there was not an unsettled claim against the estate,—and his health is good, very good for his years."

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"That may be, that may be, my boy; but I have known Maurice from childhood. When I parted from him just now he held my hand as though he wished me not to leave him, and you saw the air of secrecy and importance assumed by Burke and the inspector. Hugh Desmond, I can read some faces as well as I can read my office. I think the magistrates have heard of some villainy in contemplation. Well, if so, they are on the alert, and forewarned is forearmed."

"Mr. Burke will not minimize the gravity of any such mystery," said Hugh, "but suppose you drive over in the morning? If cousin Maurice should have any such trouble, I am sure he will confide it to us."

"All right, I will come over in the morning," answered the administrator. "Give the beast her head, Father Clancy,"—the curate was driving,—"Molly knows every foot of the way, and if we let her she will trot all the way to the presbytery."

"By your leave there, Father Cahill," cried the inspector, "if you will be after letting our car pass you, I will thank you for it. I ought to have left a trifle earlier, we must be at the station in half-an-hour."

"*Cedant togæ baculis*, let the cassocks give place to the truncheons!" shouted Father Tom with a laugh. "Father Clancy, pull in here to the right, and let the peelers go by. Good night, Tyacke! all is quiet as usual, I suppose!"

"Everything quiet," returned the inspector as his car went by, "and good night to your reverences! Now, Sergeant Brophy, make her travel."

As the vehicle containing the police officers dashed forward toward the cross-roads, it passed a boreen, or lane, on the left hand, which afforded a short cut to the old castle. It was rather steep and very stony, and was seldom used except when any of the farmers were engaged in conveying hay or potatoes to the Squire's outhouses. On either side it was roughly fenced by a rude stone wall rather more than breast-high, beyond which, on the side opposite the castle, was an old pit or quarry now densely overgrown with blackberry briars. Sergeant Brophy drove smartly past the lane, and being somewhat slow of speech he had got within sight of the cross-roads before he opened his mouth.

"Mr. Tyacke," he said, "did ye see e'er a man at the corner of the boreen?"

The inspector was smoking, and his reply was a brief nega-



five. After a moment's reflection, the sergeant said, "Maybe 'twas a shadow; but I thought at first 'twas a man," and relapsed into silence. A few minutes afterwards, the car from the presbytery passed up the lane, our hero and the curates getting down for Molly's sake and walking to the top. As they resumed their places on reaching the more level ground, which reached to the foot of the castle hill, they could plainly distinguish the two carriages and Dick Furlong. So bright was the moonlight that the whole of the Innhiscarra road from Carrig Desmond to the junction with that to Coolreagh was clearly visible beneath them.

While Edith Allyn was endeavouring to assure Miss Burke that she was very much pleased with the glimpses of Irish peasant life she had already seen, the Hon. Ulick fell fast asleep in his seat. Seeing this, Eva, assisted by the coachman, drew up the hood of the coach, thus affording the other vehicle a lead of about fifty yards, Mr. Furlong riding between them.

"I hope, my dear," said the Squire, "that you are not fatigued."

"Oh, no, cousin," returned Blanche, "not in the least. I assure you, I used often to attend the tenants' domestic festivals at Holmwood; I liked them then, I like them now."

"Ah, my dear," said Maurice, "I sometimes fear our life here will be too humdrum, too prosaic for you. Your brother's threat has been too vindictively carried out, your family is quite estranged from you for ever."

"My family, cousin Maurice, is here,—my husband,—nobler than ever in his manly strength, brighter than ever in the flower of his genius,—my child, my darling little Owen, and you and my dear friend, my sister Edith. Do you think I have one regret in the world? No, cousin, I am perfectly happy. And how can you call that a humdrum life in which so many hours,—too many, perhaps,—are given to such delightful labour? For shame, coz!"

"Well, my dear, I am glad to hear you say so. I am sure. If writing two or three pages of criticism every week for the leading weekly in the Empire is delightful to you, I am glad to hear it. At any rate, we are all proud and delighted to read it,—you know, I positively refused to keep this a secret from the Burkes and from Tom Cahill. My dear I need not say that my own happiness consists in making you and your



husband and my own little Owen as happy as I can. But here we are at the boreen; I think we cannot do better than go home this way, instead of having to go to the cross-roads and then ride back to the castle."

"Is it not very steep and rough?" asked Lady Blanche, doubtfully.

"It is, my dear," said the Squire, "but you see it is not a hundred yards to the level. Dan and I will walk, no, Mrs. Condon, you must not move, so we will take up Miss Allyn at once."

Just as Dan left the seat beside the housekeeper, the Squire also got down and went forward, presumably to lead the horses into the little lane. As he did so, there came from the corner of the stone fence on the left a red flash, a vicious hiss, and a loud explosion. There was a long, shrill scream from the carriage, and the terrified horses started off at a gallop toward the cross-roads at the very moment when their owner fell dead to the ground. Dick Furlong, with a cry of horror, brought his whip down on the hunter's shoulders, and, reining in when he reached the fatal spot, was just in time to see old Dan throw his arms above his head with a gesture of horrified despair and fall prostrate on his master's body. Half mad with excitement, Dick looked toward the fence, and there, crouching for shelter as he hurried from the spot, the form of the assassin was distinctly revealed in the moonlight. With a savage yell, Dick turned his horse's head in that direction, and, lashing the animal furiously, sprang forward and leaped the wall. The murderer half turned round at the sound of the hoofs as they struck the ground, and, seeing that he was pursued, plunged forward into the briars. Like a flash, the miller's son followed him, horse and man sinking from sight into the pit.

The report of the gun, borne on the midnight air, fell heavily on the ears of the party in the administrator's car. Father Clancy involuntarily brought Molly to her haunches, and Hugh Desmond, leaping to the ground, cried, "That means murder! follow me," and ran backward to the boreen. The policemen, too, heard the report, and were not at a loss to understand its dread significance.

"Give me the reins, Brophy! God, man, be quick!" shouted the inspector, and in a moment he was speeding backward along the road. Exactly half-way from the cross-roads

they came to an overturned carriage, whose horses were standing and breathing heavily beside the wreck. Mrs. Condon was sitting in the middle of the road, holding her mistress's head in her lap, and at first the officers thought that Lady Blanche was dead.

"God help us!" groaned Tyacke; "this is too horrible. Lift them into the car, men; gently, gently, while I run on before you and know the worst."

The awful nature of the calamity was soon enough revealed to him, and well I wot that the inspector, whatever his later experience may be, will never forget that night. How shall I attempt to portray the anguish of our hero? how describe its aggravation when the police car came up with its augmentation of woe? But even there, on that desolate road, crimsoned with the life-blood of a true and noble heart, there moved two ministering angels in Edith Allyn and Eva Burke. Father Cahill and Mr. Burke, like Hugh Desmond himself, were so stunned by the horror that they were almost benumbed and torpid. The curates,—having ascertained that Maurice was dead, he had been shot through the heart, and must have died without a groan,—hastily drew the administrator's mare from the car, and Father Clancy galloped away to summon the revellers at Darragh's cottage, while Edith and Eva devoted all their attention to Blanche. She was not dead, that much was apparent, but it was evident enough that her life was hanging by a single thread. She was placed in the carriage of Mr. Burke, with her lovely head pillowed on Edith's bosom, the body of the Squire being reverently consigned to the officers' car. Just as the sorrowful procession was about to start Tim Darragh and his friends came on the scene, and it required all the authority of Mr. Tyacke and the priests to restrain the wild outbursts of these people's sorrow and rage. Hugh Desmond and Father Cahill, together with Mr. Burke, groaning and wringing their hands, ascended the hill after the vehicles, Dan and the housekeeper having gone forward in charge of the body of their beloved master.

Not until the procession was out of sight did any one notice the absence of Furlong or bethink themselves to look for the murderer. Then it was that Conroy drew Tyacke's attention to the fact that Eva Burke had seen Furlong's wild leap. In a few minutes a search-party was organized, and almost as soon as they crossed the fence it became apparent that some

heavy body had fallen into the old quarry. Tim Darragh, Tyaoke, Conroy, and a few of the more active among the spectators undertook to explore the pit, and ere long a loud shout announced that they had made a discovery. Knives, pruning-hooks and sickles were brought into use, and used so strenuously that it soon became possible for those standing on the wall and the brink of the quarry to look down into the pit. At first all that could be clearly discerned was the body of Furlong with his head bent forward over the neck of his horse. Conroy was the first to discover that a second man lay crushed to death beneath the heavy animal. They found that Dick's left leg was broken, and that he was senseless, while the horse's head was literally smashed by the fall. Not until the body of the other man was drawn up to the light was it discovered that it was Matt Murphy, the dispossessed tenant. The murderer had, it seemed, fallen on his feet at the bottom of the pit, and ere he could recover from the shock the horse had fallen right upon his head, for Murphy's neck was broken and he was doubled up beneath the animal's body.

Before sunrise a large and excited crowd had assembled, but the police, both horse and foot, were present in force to maintain order. The body of the murderer was conveyed to Innisra, and Dick Furlong, with his leg in splints and bandages, was recovering consciousness in his father's house. Another chapter had been added to the bloody record of agrarian crime in Ireland, another reason afforded the party of Humanity and Justice in England for yielding to the demands of the demagogues whose leech-like appetite will never be satisfied until all that bears the impress of England's authority and English influence in the sister island has been swept away and obliterated.

The sun was sinking in a sea of golden glory on the evening of the day upon which the body of Maurice Desmond was consigned to the tomb. Deeper, however, than the gloom cast by the funeral was the shadow thrown by the wings of Azrael hovering above the old pile to which during so many centuries the dread messenger had borne the irreversible decrees of fate. The Lady Blanche Desmond was dying,—old Doctor Lysaght had, at the request of the great medicos from London and

Dublin, broken the news to her husband and to the Honourable Robert Meadows, her brother, as they sat,—their former enmity forgotten,—in the library. When the doctor had retired, Major Meadows took Hugh's hand, and a big tear coursed down his cheek as he said:

"Well, Desmond, my good fellow, it will be our turn one day. I did not know how much I loved her before I heard of the—the accident. The Earl is in Rome, and our mother can not be moved from her room, but I am charged with loving messages and prayers for forgiveness from all of them, parents and friends alike. Try to bear it like a man, my good fellow; calm yourself, and we will go up together."

Hugh Desmond, grateful for the sympathy, returned the pressure of his brother-in-law's hand; but he did not venture to speak. And so, when the door opened and Miss Burke beckoned him, the two men went up the staircase together, and together they stood beside the bed. The queenly head, though bandaged,—for she had been thrown from the carriage right on to a heap of stones by the roadside,—was undisturbed, the eyes were lustrous, and no traces of pain appeared on the waxen features.

"Hugh—my husband, and Robert: oh, I am so glad you are here. Tell me, dear,"—she said to her husband,—“has Robert any message from mamma?”

"He has, my love," said Hugh, in a voice husky and broken, "messages of love from your mother, Lady Margaret and all."

"And my father! has he not forgiven me, Robert?"

"He was in Rome, Blanche, but I am sure he is on his way to England by this time. O my poor sister, he has telegraphed me to assure you of his love, to ask your forgiveness for his hardness. Do not think too harshly of him, Blanche dear."

"No, indeed, Robert, it is not for me to do so, for how could I expect him to see Hugh as I saw him? It is all for the best, even my death will enlarge your views, and make you all more tolerant. I should have liked to live to see this, to be the link between you; but it cannot be. Are you friends now? let me hear that you are from your own mouths, Robert."

Husband and brother took each other's hand in silence, and Robert, stooping toward the pillow, kissed his sister's brow. At this moment Edith Allyn and Eva Burke came into the room leading little Owen.

"Kiss me once more, Robert dear," she whispered, "for I

have but a short time left me now. Go downstairs to Father Cahill, dear; he is a good man. I have asked him to comfort you all, for he has seen many younger than I cut off as suddenly. One kiss more, Robert, my brother, my dear brother; and oh, tell mamma and papa how much I love them—that I have never ceased to love them. Margaret, too, she was my friend: good bye, Robert! Do not weep, brother; I am but dying while those who love me, all but one, are left to think of me at my best. Good bye, dear brother!

At a sign from Dr. Lyssaght, Robert Meadows, wholly unable to speak, kissed his sister for the last time and swiftly sought a chair at the opposite side of the room. For a few moments she closed her eyes, and when she again opened them her husband was kneeling beside her, vainly endeavouring to suppress the grief that seemed rending him asunder. Little Owen was looking on, his face bedewed with tears, unable fully to understand the source of his father's affliction. As he looked from the one to the other in his childish sorrow, Blanche made a sign to Edith who, coming forward, placed the wife's hand on the bowed head of her husband.

"Hugh—my husband—my loved one—is this your fortitude?" she asked.

"O Blanche! my wife! my love!" he said, pressing his eyelids together as though to shut out from himself the torture he was enduring. "I cannot endure it; it will drive me mad. Was it for this that you—"

"Hush," she said, and her voice for a moment recovered its strength, "you must not say it. We have been all in all to each other; we have lived and loved. It is the common lot, my dear one; you must endure. There is Owen, our baby; you must live for him. Let me kiss him before I die."

They gently lifted the now awe-stricken child, and bent the little curl-crowned head until it touched her lips.

"Edith," she whispered, "I confide him to you, his second mother. Remember, Hugh, husband, darling! she has never ceased to love you, will you not try to—"

"Hush, dear sister," whispered Edith. "Oh, do not say it."

"Kiss me, my husband, for I am dying," and Blanche Desmond raised her head from the pillow. Encircled by the arms of Hugh and Edith, and with the last kiss of love on her lips, the daughter of a lordly line, a Lady of England, passed into the Silent Land.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

"LET ME BE BLEST TO MAKE THIS HAPPY CLOSE."

THE Earl of Guiborough, looking haggard and travel-worn, reached Carrig Desmond on the following afternoon. He was received by Robert, and was at once conducted to the room where his daughter lay dead. There it was that he encountered her husband, the man whom he had six years ago banished from his presence for her sake. Hugh was standing with folded arms contemplating the features, beautiful in death, of his loved and lost one. He did not hear them as they entered, and it was only the touch of the Earl's hand upon his shoulder that roused him from his meditation.

"Death has been before me, Mr. Desmond," said the old nobleman, "he has bridged the gulf of my pride and anticipated the reconciliation which I had determined to seek. Here, with all that is mortal of her whom we both loved before us, I offer you my hand."

"Say no more, my lord, I entreat you," answered Desmond, "I have nothing to forgive. Believe me, that from the first I was able to understand your feelings. I do not doubt, my lord, that in your position those feelings would have been mine."

The bereaved men shook their hands in token of reconciliation, and our hero and Major Meadows, seeing the Earl fall on his knees beside the bed, quietly left the room. In the evening the Earl made Father Cahill the bearer of his request that Hugh would consent that Blanche should be buried at Holmwood. Somewhat to his surprise, Desmond yielded a ready assent.

"I could almost have proposed this myself, Father Tom," he said; "I am glad that she is to lie among her own people glad above all that her dust will not mingle with that of this hate-blasted, remorseless country."

"Our troubles are such, my dear boy," said the administrator, "that they more or less involve in their consequences the stranger within our gates. You, who are not a stranger, but the inheritor and representative of a name not undistinguished in our history, must necessarily inherit all that the past, which your ancestors bore their part, prepared and transmitted to us. England is, equally with Ireland, an *Inis-fail*, or island

would like



of destiny, in which the same great problems are coming to the front."

"And where they will be settled justly and fairly to all," returned Hugh, "settled by the popular verdict formed and directed by the highest wisdom of the age. My good old friend, have you ever considered that something more than temperament may be responsible for this wild spirit of revenge which so disgraces and scourges Ireland! Have you ever thought that the continuous use of murder by the Church of Rome, its blood-guiltiness and insatiate pursuit of vengeance during so many ages, may have in a sense so affected her ignorant followers as to practically engraft this barbarian *lex talionis* on their very nature? Then, too, in the confessional, the murderer not only receives the assurance of divine forgiveness, but he finds a means of satisfying that ever-pressing impulse to unburden the mind of a painful secret without incurring the risk of being handed over to human justice."

"I am glad, my young friend," said Father Tom, "that affliction has not weakened your judgment or impaired your penetration. It may be as you say,—that is, there may be some foundation for it; who can say? I myself have had enough of my profession, and the bishop now knows that I am about to retire from active work. That much is settled; I have enough to live on until I am a hundred, if this old machine should endure so long; and next Monday Father Olancy will take my place as episcopal representative, as the fiction goes, in Inniscarra."

"I congratulate you, my dear old friend, just as both the lost ones would have done," cried our hero, "congratulate you from my heart. And now, will you not stand with me when my loved and noble darling is consigned to the tomb?"

"The very favour I was about to beg of you, Hugh, my boy," said the old man. "But you must not forget that Blanche Desmond still lives in all her nobility, beauty, and wisdom in the minds of those who loved her. In this sense, —and there is no truer one,—she is no less real to you than she was before."

"The more poignant agony is over, my friend," said Hugh, "and I am steeled to endure and to submit if acquiescence be as yet impossible for me."

"Before we go," said Father Tom, "there is poor Dick who would like to see you."

"We will go there almost directly," answered Hugh; "I had resolved upon doing so, I assure you."

"They found the patient full of sympathy for those whose sufferings, so far, outweighed his own. The poor fellow could not conceal that he was rather glad than otherwise of his broken limb, for, as he subsequently told our hero, the accident which fractured his tibia, revealed to Eva Burke that Richard Furlong was not indifferent in her eyes."

Out from the high hall, draped in sable, down the stately avenue, through the lodge gate, and into the village church, our hero and his child followed the wife and mother to the entrance of the family vault in what was once the Mary chapel. Whether or not there had been some religious ceremonial in the house prior to Hugh Desmond's arrival from Ireland this chronicle sayeth nothing further than that the husband's wishes in this regard were clearly known and should have been respected. There were present among the mourners, Edith Allyn, Eva Burke, Mrs. Wallace and her daughter, Mrs. Champernowne, Lady Margaret, Lieutenant Wallace, Mr. Burke, Father Cahill, Dr. Hanaford, and many others known to and unrecorded of this history. Of course among the spectators, the principal interest centered in the chief mourners, for all present were more or less familiar with the story of the Earl's daughter and of the music-master to whom she had given her love. As the procession moved into the church, a young woman advanced from the front rank of the bystanders and deposited a wreath of pure white flowers on the coffin. It was Alice Kendall, and as her eyes met those of our hero she learned that this proof of the villagers' love for the dead was very gratifying to him.

After the funeral, Edith Allyn with little Owen and Madeleine started for London. She had accepted the trust of her dead friend in all its solemn importance,—she had undertaken to be responsible to the father for the nurture and education of his child. They were to take up their residence at Wanstead Hall with Mr. and Mrs. Toynbee, while Hugh Desmond returned to the scene of his affliction. He had determined,—being doubtless considerably influenced by Father Tom,—to live among his tenantry, and to do his duty honestly and fearlessly. He had plans,—not Utopian or overstrained, but eminently practicable,—for the general improvement, and,

like a wise man, he recognized that all reformers should begin at home and exercise their influence within due bounds. He was not altogether without examples in the good work proposed, for there are and have long been landlords in Ireland who have devoted their best energies to the moral and substantial well-being of the people. He was fortunate in possessing an influential auxiliary in the ex-administrator, whose sanction of various innovations seemed almost to guarantee their utility. Mr. and Mrs. Furlong too,—for when the old miller died, full of years and honoured by all for his steady belief in the future development of Ireland's industries, Eva Burke's family pride was found to impose no obstacle in the way of Dick's happiness,—zealously co-operated with our hero in all his plans; so that, on the whole, despite some slight disappointments, Hugh was well satisfied with the improvement generally discernible.

In this manner two years went by, and at last the time arrived when our hero felt himself at liberty to cross the channel and to fulfil the dearest wish of his heart,—a desire sanctioned, as he knew, with the last breath of his wife. Arriving in London, he once more went over the same route he had taken on the occasion of his first journey to Wanstead, and early in the evening he found himself at the Hall. Under the impression that he was the parent or guardian of one of the pupils, the servant ushered him into the parlour. He had sent no intimation of his coming, but Edith had heard his footstep in the hall, and when the door was thrown open she stood before him with Owen by her side. The boy ran at once into his father's arms with a shout of delight, exclaiming, "Mamma, I know him! I know him! 'Tis papa!"

"Yes, Owen," he said, "'tis papa, come at last, my darling. And now that I have kissed you, will you not take me to—"

"To mamma? yes," replied the child, "for Madeleine said I was always to call her mamma, not auntie."

With the child's hand in his own, he stepped forward to where she stood. She had tried to utter a welcome, but the words had died on her lips. Her hand as he took it was strangely cold, and he almost fancied that she shivered.

"Edith," he said, "you have not forgotten what your sister said to me, you have not forgotten what took place when my child, her child, was consigned to your loving care! You have not forgotten, you cannot forget, the past. Will you not

for a moment try to imagine that I have come back to the old home at Culm Tor to claim what is mine, rendered doubly mine by constancy and by unfailing love and friendship to her whose memory is dear to us both? Edith, you will always be Owen's mother, will you not? You will not refuse to share the lot of the mariner's son?"

"I will refuse nothing you ask me," she said as he drew her to his breast, and while they stood thus clasped together in holy love Mrs. Toynbee entered the room. The good lady paused a moment to wipe a tear from her eye, and then advancing she said:

"When you are both at leisure, my dears, perhaps Mr. Desmond will shake hands with an old friend. Edith, my love, if you cry you will make your eyes red, and your uncle will rally you all the evening."

"I do not think Mr. Toynbee will be very jealous if I kiss his wife also," said Hugh, suiting the action to the word, while Edith, taking Owen with her, hastened off to her own room.

When Mr. Toynbee, who had been out for a walk, put in his appearance and saluted our hero he may have, as he afterwards insisted, at once seen that "there was something in the wind." However this may be, he made no remark upon it until Edith and Owen came down to tea, and then only in such a manner that the listeners were certainly justified in considering that he had been taken by surprise.

"Ten minutes late, dear," he said, "and you bearing a hitherto deserved reputation for punctuality."

"As Mrs. Edith Desmond, of Carrig Desmond, which I believe she has consented to become," interposed Mrs. Toynbee, "my niece will be able to practise that virtue in a country where it is popularly supposed to be discountenanced."

"Bless my soul!" cried the schoolmaster, rising from his chair to seize Hugh's hand, and in his impetuosity upsetting Mr. Skilton's tea into his lap, "you don't say so! Well, my dears," he continued, looking apologetically down on Mr. Skilton, who was mopping his knees with his handkerchief, "I congratulate you both. Hugh Desmond has formed some pretty strong opinions, but the older I grow the stronger becomes my conviction that domestic love and felicity form the only solid rock upon which our civilization can defy the assaults of time."

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